

The Villages Health®

AUDIOLOGY PATIENT NEWSLETTER
August 2022

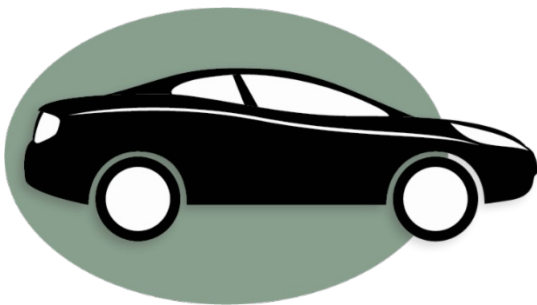
Cognitive Decline, Sensitive Understanding



Consumers contending with a barrage of advertising normally analyze decisions about which products to purchase and why. Given perceived needs or wants, decision-making criteria might include:

- Overall functionality • Features and benefits • Known costs

For instance, with essential cars and computers, we expect them to run properly without nuisance or complications. In contrast, when, at just the wrong times, our car doesn't start or computer glitches arise, how does it feel? The "if it's not broke, don't fix it" mantra **quickly turns troublesome**.



When frequently used consumer products are not functioning reliably or broken, problem-solving mindsets pivot to fixing. Shall we call AAA for a jump start or tech support? The point is, beyond normal wear and tear, if performance expectations are unmet, we react promptly.

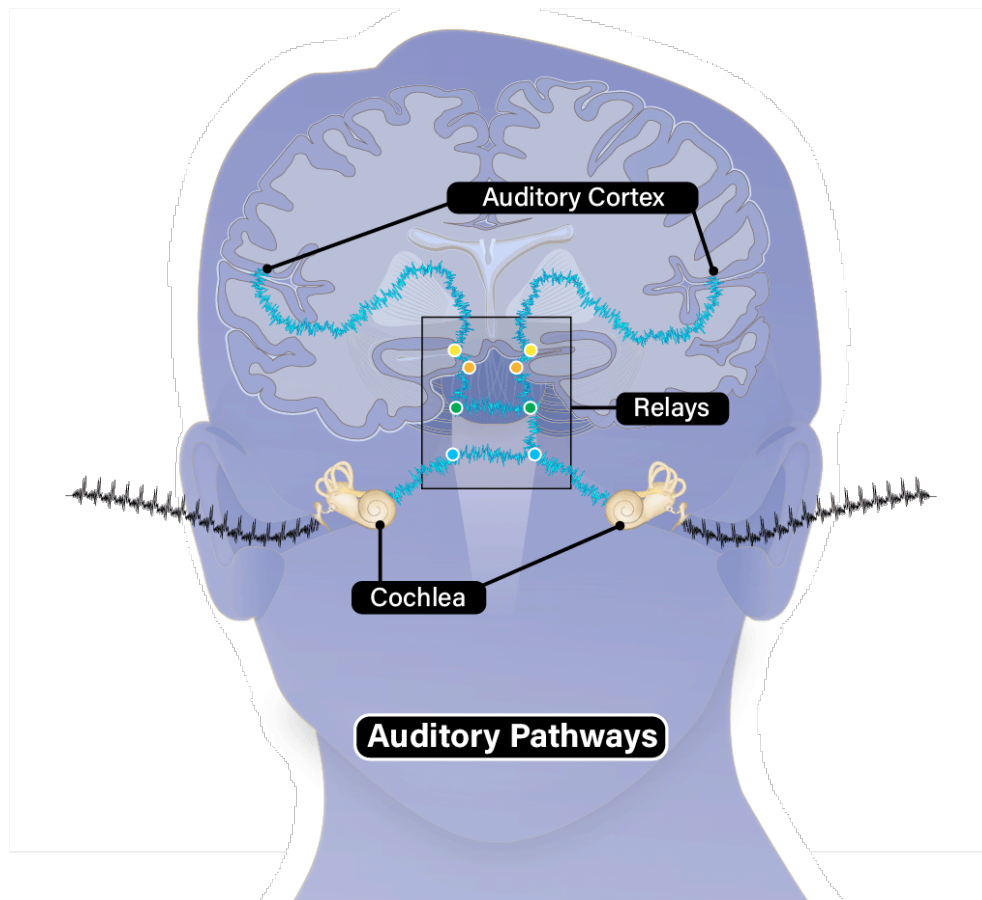
By analogy, aging healthcare consumers should make well-informed decisions with respect to optimal quality of life goals. **Sensibly**, with our...

Eyes, we aim to see best, often described as 20/20 vision. When aging leads to a cloudy lens, blurred vision may indicate **mild visual impairment**. To prevent further loss of sight, cataract surgery is a common and highly effective surgical procedure. The cloudy lens is removed, a clear one with personalized prescription implanted and beyond initial healing process, one sees better for years.

Ears, we aim to hear best, every waking moment. When presbycusis, **mildly impaired hearing** that gradually occurs with aging is evident, auditory stimulus may become less clear, causing challenges with daily communication, especially in noisy listening situations. With personalized prescriptions and expert fitting, advanced hearing aids can prevent further hearing loss, empowering us to experience precious sounds. Taking care of ears adds life to years.

While *Ears Collect* auditory stimulus, *Brains Connect* with the tiny cochlea, processing sound waves into electrical impulses our auditory nerve transmits for the brain to interpret as recognizable sounds. Hearing acuity is systematically influenced by *Cognitive Abilities* including skills related to perception, learning, memory, understanding, awareness, reasoning, judgment, intuition, and language.

Functionally, it is our brain that hears, not our ears.



Do you know what...

... you have 86 billion of?

Neurons

... neurons are?

Information messengers within brain and nervous system

... synapses are?

Trillions of connection points where brain activity occurs

... eyes and ear sensory organs must share?

Brain processing resources

Throughout the aging process, our brain changes and having discussed aspects of mild visual or hearing impairments, **Mild Cognitive Impairment** or **MCI**, may be indicated by a gradually increasing difficulty with everyday activities such as:

- Remembering names, words or appointments
- Losing your train of thought in conversations
- Struggles with decision making or task completion
- Difficulty finding your way in familiar surroundings
- Feelings of anxiety, irritability and frustration



While overall cognitive function may be within ordinary range, family and friends may begin noticing **signs and symptoms** requiring careful evaluation. Timely responses are crucial, as MCI is frequently **a phase between** reduced cognitive function normally expected with aging and precursor of more extensive dementia related symptoms. Recognizing the difficulty in predicting the potential progression in Cognitive Decline for an individual, there is **extensive research** on *how improved auditory stimulation can positively impact brain function*.

We should understand what...

<i>... auditory deprivation is</i>	Lack of consistent sound stimuli and risk of nerve atrophy
<i>...cognitive load is</i>	The limited amount of information short-term memory can hold at one time
<i>quantity and quality</i>	Help improve cognitive function
<i>... neuroplasticity is</i>	The brain's ability to form and reorganize neural resources

When your brain is deprived of consistent sound stimuli, there is risk of nerve atrophy with the notion of **"use it or lose it"** coming to mind. Like daily exercise, optimum hearing acuity helps make healthy connections, not just with those in your circle of life, but within your brain. Consider your ears and brain a **Dynamic Duo**, staying intently focused on change for the better.

While we take your hearing care seriously,
a little laughter goes a long way.

Good Humor, Healthy Hearing



Mild Cognitive Decline?

Our clinics will be closed
Monday,
September 5th



VISIT OUR WEBSITE

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Schedule an appointment for you or your loved ones.
(352) 674-1799



**The Villages
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Audiology Department

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