

HOLIDAY TIPS



Tips for an Enjoyable Holiday

1. Use a transcription app like AVA or Live Transcribe

- These are amazing tools that can help “hear” conversations. Just, make sure you have people speak more slowly and that there is no extra ambient noise in the background (i.e. music playing) for this app to work well
- Get a Bluetooth Lapel Mic and use AVA for yourself or your children who can read. This can be utilized in places of worship, classes, lectures, story times, etc

2. Put hearing devices in a dry storage box

- Although it’s not Summer, you may get hot and sweaty in your winter hats and sweaters

3. For big gatherings:

- Choose a venue that is well lit and not too loud
- Opt for circular tables as opposed to long rectangular ones

4. For children meeting Santa:

- Let Santa know ahead of time and even pull-down beard (if willing)

5. Go holiday shopping during the week!

- Avoid weekends if possible to limit the overstimulation from the crowds

6. Be prepared that your Deaf or Hard of Hearing (DHH) child and/or family member may be fatigued more easily!

- Holiday and family fun can drain any DHH person more quickly than you’d expect
- Changes in routine and environment, as well as multiple voices at once are A LOT. DHH people may not respond well and need more quiet time to recharge
- Consider using remote microphone technology at home

Let's Talk Turkey Time



- Position yourself away from sources of noise, such as a TV or radio.
- Elevate your voice, and slow down the rate of speech **slightly**.
- Ensure your hearing aids and CI processors are clean and battery fresh.
- Obtain attention: face an individual and do not eat while speaking.



5 Ingredient Corn Casserole

One of my most recent favorite side dishes to have when we sit down together is this simple **5 Ingredient Corn Casserole**. This dish is so simple and versatile. Trust me... you won't be able to mess it up! There are many variations to this recipe, but this one is my favorite by far.

Prep Time: 5 minutes
Cook Time: 45 minutes
Total Time: 50 minutes

Ingredients

- 8 ounces Jiffy Corn Muffin mix
- 15 ounces whole kernel corn (drained)
- 15 ounces creamed corn (not drained)
- 1 cup sour cream
- 1/2 cup melted butter

Instructions

- Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.
- In a bowl, mix all of the ingredients together and pour into a greased 8" x 8" baking pan.
- Cook uncovered for 45-50 minutes or until lightly browned.
- Let it cool down for about 10-15 minutes and enjoy!

Notes

- Mix in 2 eggs...this creates just a bit more of a lighter corn casserole.
- Add 1/2 to 1 cup shredded cheddar cheese.
- Add 1/4 cup to 1/2 cup sugar...this of course makes it a very sweet corn casserole. If you add the eggs and sugar, it almost takes like a corn cake and could be eaten for dessert!



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News from the Cochlear Implant Center | Fall 2023

Fall Seminar Recap

WMCHHealth Cochlear Implant Center hosted a professional seminar with more than 100 educators, Speech-language pathologists, and Teachers of the Deaf from Westchester and the surrounding counties attended the first fall seminar conference, titled “Facilitating Academic Success in Children with Cochlear Implants and Hearing Aids.” The Cochlear Implant Center at Westchester Medical Center hosted this seminar in conjunction with Partners in Hearing (<https://partnersinhearing.org>), a non-profit organization that supports services for pediatric patients with cochlear implants.

Keynote Speaker, Kym Meyer, Ph.D. CCC/A presented on “Successful Transitioning of Hearing Impaired Students into the Mainstream” and “How to Help Every Child Meet Their Best Potential.”

Members of the Cochlear Implant Center Team include Katrina Stidham, M.D. Chief, Division of Neurotology, Department of Otolaryngology/ Head and Neck Surgery and Director of the Cochlear Implant Center, Mindy Schmelzer, AuD, Kristi D’Auria, AuD, Rivka Bornstein, AuD, Jessica Hoffman, AuD, Samantha Morgan, AuD and Michelle Albera, MS,

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Patient Perspective:

Meet Joe the Wood Carver

Joe Liporace received his right cochlear implant last year. After receiving his cochlear implant, Joe has been actively giving back to other patients at the Cochlear Implant Center at WMCHHealth, creating beautiful wood carvings of bears that are presented to our implant patients at the time of their cochlear implant surgery.

Let's learn a little bit more about Joe.

Joe lost his hearing in 2011 following surgery for a hip replacement. He received IV antibiotics that, unfortunately, caused him to suffer a rapid decline in his hearing. In about a month, he lost much of his usable hearing and had further decline over six years. He initially tried using a hearing aid on the left ear for a time but had limited benefit. His right ear had too much hearing loss to even be considered for an aid. Joe continued to suffer, unable to hear for many years. He felt

socially isolated and even depressed. When he would go out to a restaurant or any place with several people, he couldn't enjoy the experience.

Then, finally came, what Joe describes as "a day of reckoning". He was at an educational event on foraging mushrooms, something that he was really interested in learning about, but he realized that he couldn't hear enough of the talk to know what was going on. He decided then that he needed to make a change. He had known about implants for a while, but was initially deathly afraid of an implant, and was worried that it wouldn't would help him. However, looking back, he can't believe he waited so long to have an implant placed!

When asked what he likes most about his cochlear implant, Joe says "How well I can hear! I walked around for 12 years in the dark. Not being able to hear is like being blind. I am still in shock today what a difference in my life it made".

Joe is a skilled artisan working in wood carving and painting. He is also a recognized member of the Ramapo Munsee Lunaape Nation. In the Lunaape Nation, his title is "Joe the Carver". After receiving his cochlear implant, he wanted to use his talents to support other patients undergoing cochlear implant surgery. Joe, with the blessing of his chief, Sachem Maque; Chief Perry, has created individual bear carvings that are given to patients undergoing cochlear implant surgery at WMCHHealth. The Bear is a symbol of healing and spiritual purity to the Ramapo Munsee People, and it is Joe's hope that this symbol will be a comfort to other patients undergoing their journey to better hearing!



Fall Seminar Recap (cont)

CCC-SLP, LSLC Cert. AVT presented on a variety of talks, including *The Etiology of Hearing Loss, State of the Art Techniques used during Cochlear Implant Surgery, The Audiological Test Battery, Cochlear Implant Evaluation and Mapping, Hearing Aid and FM Technology, and Auditory Verbal Therapy.*

The Westchester Medical Center Cochlear Implant Center would like to thank Phonak, MedEL, Cochlear, and Advanced Bionics for being onsite to present their latest technology. A big thank you also to Monique McGoogan, Natalie Fuentes, Thalian Rojas, and Candace Latimore Narh for all their hard work in getting this conference off the ground!

We hope that this conference will be one of many to come and look forward to meeting with our colleagues in the community again next year for another educational seminar!



Staff Spotlight: Monique McGoogan

Q: Has your knowledge base and/or thoughts on hearing loss changed since becoming the Practice Supervisor of the Cochlear Implant Center at WMC? If so, how have they changed?

Hearing loss has not been a prominent health issue within my family or community until recently. Since becoming the Practice Supervisor, I have learned so much about the various levels of hearing loss and what can cause hearing loss. I have a newfound passion for those who suffer from hearing loss. I pay attention to my loved ones as they read my lips as I speak, those who may lean into one side to gain the best volume from a conversation. Those who check out in noisy environments. I am in a much better position to help and educate.

Q: What do you know about hearing loss and cochlear implantation now that you didn't know prior to joining the team at WMC?

Growing up it was said that Hearing loss was something that happened to those who were born without the ability to hear and those who progressed in age. I never knew that hearing loss could be sudden or caused by particular hereditary diseases that affect people over time. Understanding the auditory system has been remarkable. I now know that God has blessed physicians with gifted hands and with technology to assist the cochlear nerve to once again or for the first time process sound from that nerve through the inner ear to the brain, and then the brain identifies sounds through the help of auditory and speech rehabilitation. It's an experience that will give each patient a quality of life.

Q: If you had to choose between giving up sleep or giving up desserts, what would you choose and why?

This is a very hard question (laugh out loud!). I absolutely love sweets. My favorite is dark chocolate but I would give that all up for a good night of sleep. The body repairs itself during sleep, particularly REM sleep. I believe in Rest. It is important to our mental health. It is important to our digestive

system among other things. Every new morning is a brand new day to live to learn and to laugh. It may sound cheesy but it's true. The weekends are the best because I let my body wake up on its own just to see how tired I have been. If I sleep in and I'm still tired, it lets me know that my body is over exerted and although I may be resting I'm truly lacking healthy sleep cycles.

Q: Describe your perfect weekend.

I wake up early on a Saturday and watch a good show while fixing a big breakfast. A car ride to the beach. Lay in the sand and listen to the wave's crash. It's just early enough to not be so hot but the water is warm. Home in time to watch a good action movie on Netflix. Popcorn and whoppers. Early bedtime! Sunday morning church service and a great Restaurant in the afternoon. I cannot think of a better weekend.

Q: What in your life has prepared you best for your current role as the Practice Supervisor of the Cochlear Implant Center at WMC?

When COVID hit New York, I was one of the members of the workforce that never worked so hard in my life. I don't think any of us were prepared for how this would affect us mentally. The next year as COVID was still so prominent in our world my mother passed away! When I returned from my leave I was not the same. Something that laid dormant in me was awoken. I stopped being afraid to succeed! I stopped thinking that I wasn't meant for great opportunities. Growing up with dyslexia and dyscalculia kept me introverted. I was always afraid to ask questions, and speak in front of others, and this kept me hidden. Suddenly during those times in my life, I found my voice! It was the sound of Leadership and worth and insightfulness and resourcefulness. When the opportunity presented itself to become part of this team. I actually did not hesitate. I'm so thankful that I didn't!

Creating an Inclusive Home for your d/Deaf and Hard of Hearing Family Members:

Creating this type of home environment can be a daunting task, but the following are some suggestions of EASY ways to make your home comfortable for everyone family member with hearing loss and without any barriers.

> Link your phone to the home device system:

- You can receive notifications and alerts through your phone's visual and vibrotactile cues
- There are control features for many home devices that can be accessed remotely, such as turning off lights, adjusting the thermostat or locking the doors
- Closed captioning or visual alerts can be accessed through your smartphone

> Buy quieter appliances!

- Loud appliances can make it extremely difficult for everyone with hearing loss to hear conversations and even important environmental sounds, such as an alarm

> Smart home security system:

- Consider a smart doorbell with a camera that will alert you via your phone when someone is at the door. Safe and VERY convenient
- You can even connect the security system to light bulbs that can flash a certain color for specific alerts—for example, if there's a fire, you can have the light flash red
- The system can even text you the specific alert information. Very convenient

> Smart bed Shaker

- These can be added to any bed, has wi-fi capability, and a VERY strong shake to wake you up. It can even be connected to Alexa

> Lighting in the home matters!

- Aim for balanced and consistent lighting throughout the home to allow for optimal lip reading and ability to read facial expressions
- If room is too bright, add curtains that can be pulled during times of intense sunlight
- Dark room? Add more windows or recessed lighting

> Home Acoustics

- You don't want your home full of echoes as it can be very distracting and bothersome
- Think about double or triple paned windows so that the outside sounds are quieter
- Lower ceilings improve acoustics! However, if lowering ceilings are out of the question, consider incorporating softer furniture, pillows, wall art to soak up sounds