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PRESS RELEASE

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Audiology Services Now Available in Silverton

Silverton - If you think your hearing isn't what is used to be, you're not alone. In fact, it's estimated that 30 million people nationwide are burdened with some degree of hearing loss.

"Only 15-20% of people with hearing loss take advantage of today's technology by using a hearing assistive device," says audiologist Renate Johnson, MA, FAAA. Johnson provides comprehensive audiology tests at Silverton Specialists Center at 454 Welch Street. The center recently installed Silverton's first audiology booth.

In many cases, hearing loss develops over a period of several years. Since it is painless and gradual, you might not notice it. What you might notice is a ringing or other sound in your ear (called tinnitus), which could be the result of long-term exposure to noise that has damaged the hearing nerve. Or, you may have trouble understanding what people say; they may seem to be mumbling, especially when you are in a noisy place such as in a crowd or at a party. This could be the beginning of high-frequency hearing loss which is easily detected with a comprehensive audiology test.

In general, she says, if hearing loss has come on gradually, an audiologist is an excellent resource for diagnosis and treatment. "If the loss is sudden or associated with other symptoms, such as pain, pressure, drainage, dizziness or facial weakness, you should see an ear, nose and throat specialist or your primary care physician," says Johnson.

Audiologists like Johnson are trained to diagnose, manage and treat hearing or balance problems. She provides thorough hearing tests for persons six-months of age and older, fitting and programming of digital hearing aids, supplies and repairs. Johnson will be working closely with otolaryngologist Kelly Rydlund, MD for further treatment and referrals. Otolaryngologists are physicians trained in the medical and surgical treatment of patients with diseases and disorders of the ear, nose, throat.

Hearing loss in adults has many causes such as disease or infection, ototoxic drugs, exposure to noise, tumors, trauma, and the aging process. Since excessive noise exposure is a leading cause of hearing loss, prevention is just an earplug away. Hearing protection devices decrease the intensity of sound that reaches the eardrum. Properly fitted earplugs or muffs reduce noise 15 to 30 decibels.

"The majority of people with hearing loss begin to notice after age 19," says Johnson. "But young children are also at risk." Detected early, these impairments can be managed with good success.

"Hearing aids have advanced significantly," Johnson says. "Digital hearing aids can be tailor-made to compensate for an individual's particular hearing loss."

For more information or to make an appointment, call 873-1647.