

Protect yourself from sun damage

By Jim Cornelius
Editor in Chief

Dry conditions and lots of glorious sunshine are part of what we all love about Sisters Country. But those same conditions that make outdoor living here such a pleasure can be tough on our skin.

That dry air can leach moisture from our skin — moisture that is hard enough to retain as we grow older. And the sun bearing down in summer or glinting off a crust of white snow in winter can do damage that ages us — or even threatens our health.

Wendy Jacobsen (BS, RN) of W Aesthetics in Bend notes that we produce hyaluronic acid naturally — but start losing it in our 20s. Hyaluronic acid acts like a sponge, capturing and retaining moisture in the skin. It's what gives us that supple, soft, plump-skinned "baby fat" appearance in our youth. In our 20s, we start producing less of it, and eventually the lack leads to signs of aging — fine lines and an uneven texture to the skin.

To combat this inevitable and natural process, Jacobsen recommends using "a very good cleanser" and regularly applying a moisturizer with peptides. Regular use of such quality moisturizers provides that invaluable hyaluronic acid to retain moisture and "plump" the skin.

Staying well hydrated helps a lot, too. A broadly-accepted rule of thumb is to drink half of our body weight in ounces of water each day. So if you weigh 140 pounds, drink 70 ounces of water per day. That's eight or nine eight-ounce glasses, 4.3 pints, or a little more than two quarts of water each day. Jacobsen notes that we can also get a lot

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Combating hearing loss with screening, technology

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Your friends and family may notice it before you do: you're not quite "there" during conversations, especially in a crowded, noisy restaurant or a party. You seem to have a hard time following a conversation. Or maybe you keep asking "what did he say" during a movie.

You may be suffering from hearing loss, which can come on so gradually that it's not immediately apparent.

Janet Kenyon, Doctor of Audiology and partner in Kenyon Audiology in Bend, recommends that everyone get their hearing checked, with regular screenings starting at age 40.

"It's nice to get a good baseline," she said.

An exam is then recommended every two years or as needed, "especially if they notice that there's some difference in their communication abilities," Dr. Kenyon said.

Sometimes, all that's needed is cleaning out a blockage due to earwax. But often, there is damage that has caused permanent hearing loss. Fortunately, advances in technology have put unobtrusive, sophisticated and effective hearing aids within reach for more and more people.

"The technology is fairly sophisticated," Dr. Kenyon told *The Nugget*, offering increased frequency range through miniaturization of speakers.

"High-frequency hearing loss accounts for most of the hearing losses," Dr. Kenyon noted.

Hearing loss can be caused by exposure to loud noises — but it can be more complicated than that. Some drugs and medications are "ototoxic" — meaning that they can have a toxic effect on the auditory nerve. This can result in hearing loss that may be temporary and may be permanent.

"If you already have hearing loss, an ototoxic drug or a combination of drugs that

“They think it’s just the noise, but it’s also what they’re breathing.”
— Dr. Janet Kenyon



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is ototoxic can have a big impact," Dr. Kenyon said.

And, curiously, fumes from noisy gas powered equipment such as a weedeater or chainsaw can have a compounding effect on hearing.

"People don't connect them," Dr. Kenyon said. "They think it's just the noise, but it's also what they're breathing."

Protecting your hearing from loud noises — from machinery to gunfire to loud music — is obviously important. So is paying attention to the fumes you're breathing and the medications you are taking.

But if you do experience hearing loss, you have a lot of options.

Dr. Kenyon noted that insurance coverage is moving in a positive direction regarding coverage, so you should check what your carrier can offer. Military veterans may be eligible for hearing aids through the Veterans Administration.

And good hearing aids are not out of financial reach if you have to pay out of pocket. There are options ranging from \$500 up, Dr. Kenyon told *The Nugget*.

"There's a variety of price ranges, and you can get relatively sophisticated technology for not too much," she said.

That technology has evolved from bulky over-the-ear units, though those still

have their applications.

"At our practice, we recommend putting the microphone in the ear canal most of the time," Dr. Kenyon said.

Placing the hearing aid in the ear canal calls for special services to make sure fit and function are optimal, which Kenyon Audiology provides.

"We do custom-fitting, which we feel is the most important thing we can do," Dr. Kenyon said.

Kenyon Audiology has an onsite lab, and also pioneered a maintenance procedure that

keeps hearing aids operational at minimal expense. According to Dr. Kenyon, a simple vacuuming can restore hearing aids 75 percent of the time.

Hearing well is a vital part of our quality of life. Conversation connects us to others, and loss of hearing can lead to isolation and even depression. With the availability of regular hearing screenings, advances in technology and improvements in insurance coverage, it behooves anyone to avail themselves of hearing support.

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Tip: Apply at least a SPF 30 or higher sunscreen every 2 hours and drink lots of water to nourish skin

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