

# HEARING MATTERS

*by*  
Cyril Peach

## *In Praise of the Audiologist*

It was music to my ears when Labrador-Grenfell Health made the announcement that it had made arrangements with an audiologist to provide audiology services for the region.

As of January 7, 2008, Joan Harron began her employment with Labrador-Grenfell Health. Even though it is only on a part-time basis, it is a far better service from what was provided before. She will be visiting our area on a six weeks on/six weeks off basis for a period of one year.

Audiologists are highly-trained people. Most of them spend a minimum of six years in university to obtain a Masters Degree. Some obtain an undergraduate degree in Communication Disorders. Many, like Ms. Harron, receive a professional Doctorate of Audiology.

What do audiologists do? They provide primary hearing health care. They can provide a hearing aid to a hearing impaired individual. They are qualified to certify hearing impairments for funding agencies on both the provincial and federal levels. They can help in the prevention of hearing loss. They can identify hearing disorders. They can provide treatment and rehabilitation of auditory balance disorders.

With the aid of ultra-modern equipment, audiologists can perform comprehensive evaluation of auditory functions. They can accurately identify the presence, nature, and degree of hearing disorders which enables them to determine the most effective course of treatment or management.

Apart from prescribing hearing aids , they can fit and dispense a wide array of assistive listening devices such as alerting systems, pocket talkers, and telephone amplifiers.

Audiologists can provide counselling and aural rehabilitative services such as speech reading which is the new term for lip reading.

Ms. Harron has set aside a few days each visit where people can make their own appointments to see her. However, she recommends that everyone see their family doctor because if their family doctor refers them, they will be seen quicker. The family doctor can determine if the person has a wax build-up or an infection which he or she can treat. The public may call 897-2174 or 897-2115 to book an appointment.

Getting your hearing checked regularly is as important as keeping up-to-date on your overall health. Good hearing is important to a person's quality of life. People think nothing of getting their blood pressure checked, their vision checked, their teeth checked, etc. But they generally forget their ears.

Hearing loss is not only a problem for the elderly but can begin at any age. Receiving professional, specialized care from your audiologist is necessary to ensure that your hearing is treated with the respect it deserves.

Make plans to visit your audiologist soon.

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