

SPRING 2017

NOW HEAR THIS!

HEARING WELLNESS CENTER

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Communication Strategies for noisy environments

You can also temper the effects of challenging listening conditions by using effective communication strategies. Think about the last time you went to a restaurant and found yourself bombarded by noise: other people's conversation, mood music in the background, clanging dishes and cutlery, noise from the kitchen, etc. Now think about what strategies you could use to minimize the difficulties you have the next time you dine out. You may find these suggestions helpful:

- * Plan ahead by picking a quieter restaurant. For example, unless you're content to read the captioning on the televisions, avoid sports bars. Try to find carpeted restaurants that have chairs with rollers on the legs (thus preventing an annoying scraping sound when they are moved), plants, and sound absorbent materials on the tables and walls.
- * Make reservations ahead of time, and ask for accommodations.
- * Go to your favorite restaurants, so you already know their specialties and options, such as choices of salad dressings or side dishes.
- * Pick the best day and time (not Friday nights!) to dine out.
- * Look on the restaurant's website to preview the menu.
- * Choose to dine with a smaller number of dining partners.
- * Pick a table in the least noisy part of the restaurant (e.g., away from the kitchen, bar, wait service stations, etc.).
- * Ask for seating in a well-lit area.
- * Remember that even people with normal hearing experience greater difficulty in a noisy listening environment than they do in a quiet listening environment. So, don't expect to do as well with your hearing aids in the noisy restaurant as you do in the quiet of your home.
- * Sit with your back to the window, so that lighting is on the speaker's face, not in your eyes.
- * Request that staff turn down background music (you are probably not the only patron bothered by the volume of the music).
- * Tell the host/hostess and waiter/waitress, as well as your dining companions, that you have a hearing loss and that it will help you if they slow down a bit, speak a little bit louder, and face you directly.
- * When possible, indicate choices before you're asked. Examples: "I'd like a salad with Italian dressing" or "I would like a burger, no fries."
- * Ask the waiter/waitress for a printed list of the specials of the day.
- * Use directional microphones and/or an FM system. If your hearing aids are set to directional, be sure to sit with your back to the main noise source.
- * Don't bluff!

If restaurant dining is for business, request another place to meet.