

# Your Hearing News

[www.hearingbalance.com.au](http://www.hearingbalance.com.au)

Issue No. 17  
December 2008

Hearing & Balance Centre  
St Vincent's Hospital

Hearing & Balance Double Bay  
Shop 4, Goldman Lane, Double Bay

## HBC News



Many of you will remember *Karen Baker* our former admin assistant who left HBC in 2006 to pursue a teaching degree. Karen became profoundly hearing impaired in both ears following an accident as a child. In 2007, just before starting uni she had a cochlear implant with the support and encouragement of Audiologist *Sarah Platt-Hepworth* and surgeon *Dr Nigel Biggs*. We recently received an email from Karen which reflects how much her life has changed since the implant. She has given us permission to share a snippet of the email with you:

"I was thinking of you the other day, after I had just come off the phone with one of my uni friends. I suddenly realised that I had just had my first phone conversation in which I had actually telephoned someone and had a good old whinge about uni work and presentations in general. In the past, if I wanted a whinge I had to wait until I got to work and Wendy arrived so I could unload, or email someone then wait days before they got back to me. Those days are over, and I can now just pick up the phone, rant and rave for 15 minutes and then hang up and have a chocolate bar and feel instantly better. Isn't it a miracle!"



Karen  
enjoying a  
chat.  
Nov 2008

Cochlear implants have certainly come along way and the large majority of recipients can now expect to achieve excellent results. However, it should be pointed out that using the telephone with an implant, although achievable for some, does depend on many factors such as the type and length of deafness before implantation. For more information on cochlear implants feel free to speak to one of our Audiologists or visit [www.hearingbalance.com.au/ciassess.html](http://www.hearingbalance.com.au/ciassess.html)



## Festive Season Competition

You could win a Siemens Gigaset SL375 cordless home phone (RRP \$219).

To enter the competition, simply complete our 5 minute questionnaire. Log on to the Hearing & Balance Centre website [www.hearingbalance.com.au](http://www.hearingbalance.com.au) and download the questionnaire from the link on the home page. Fill it out and send it in – simple as that. If you don't have access to the web, just give us a ring and we'll post a copy of the questionnaire to you.

The Siemens SL375 features:

- Bluetooth wireless connectivity
- Integrated answering machine
- SMS



Competition closes on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2009.  
The winner will be notified by phone or mail.

## Induction "loop" systems and telecoils: what are they and how do they work?

An induction loop system enables amplified sound from a microphone, TV or other sound source to be fed through a loop of wire which is placed around the perimeter of a room. Individual loops worn around the neck or telephone loops are other alternatives.

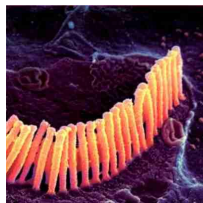


When a hearing aid is switched to the T or telecoil position it responds only to those sounds coming through the loop. An advantage is that when on T switch, the microphone of the hearing aid is generally switched off so unwanted and distracting background noise is not picked up.

Loop systems have been around for decades and although hearing aids are now moving towards Bluetooth capabilities, the loop system is still an extremely useful, economical feature of many hearing aids. Indeed, many hearing aid users are unaware that their hearing aid has a T switch built into it. If you're not sure ask your Audiologist.

A patient of the Hearing & Balance Centre recently did his own survey of theatres in Sydney to determine which one's provided either a loop system or other device to assist hearing impaired people. Although the list is not yet complete, he and we thought the information would be useful to share. A fact sheet can be downloaded from [www.hearingbalance.com.au](http://www.hearingbalance.com.au) or phone us for a copy.

## Scientific Update: growing inner ear hair cells



The use of stem cells in research has been a hot topic over the past few years. As a result of this we invited Dr Sharon Oleskevich to visit the Hearing & Balance Centre to give our Audiologists an update on the research her team is conducting at the Garvin Institute. Those of you who attended the recent Hearing & Balance Centre Open Day will also have heard Dr Oleskevich speak about her research.

Patients often enquire about whether it is possible to cure hearing loss by re-growing the hair cells or nerves in the inner ear. As you will all know, once the inner ear hair cells are damaged in the human ear they do not regenerate. It is however interesting to note that auditory hair cells in some fish and birds regenerate themselves. Dr Oleskevich and her team are currently exploring the potential of adult stem cells to replace damaged hair cells in mice (with the view to extending this to humans in the future!).

Their research involves using stem cells from the lining of the nose and converting them into hair cell-like cells. Using fine microsurgical techniques they have successfully injected the stem cells into the cochlea of deaf mice. They can then test for the recovery of hearing using an auditory brainstem response (ABR) test, a test that is also used in humans. The aim is to determine if the injected stem cells have converted into hair cells and formed the correct connections to the brain, thus repairing the hearing loss present in the deaf mice.

So far, Dr Oleskevich explained that overcoming technical difficulties such as perfecting the micro-surgical techniques used, determining which breed of mouse to use and how to successfully deafen them have all proved challenging. However, results do indicate that the mice injected with stem cells have less hearing loss than those in the control group. This is certainly an exciting development and one we shall be following closely. However, it will be several years before such techniques are trialed in humans. For more information about this research visit: [www.garvan.org.au](http://www.garvan.org.au)



Designed never to be seen, **be by ReSound** is the first product in an entirely new hearing instrument category called Invisible-Open-Technology (IOT™).

## Who's it for?

**be by ReSound™** is the perfect choice if you have a **mild to moderate** hearing loss and you're looking for a hearing instrument that fits **any listening environment** but is **almost invisible** in the ear. You won't have to worry about wind noise and you'll have no trouble wearing glasses as the **be** sits entirely in the ear.



In terms of sound quality and comfort, Audiologist Sarah Platt-Hepworth says the **be** has a lot going for it. "The position of the microphone is particularly interesting. Sitting high up in the concha area of the ear, the hearing aid does not distort the natural shape of the ear, allowing the ear to "catch sound" in the normal fashion. The microphone is also protected by the ear which eliminates annoying wind noise. In terms of comfort it is probably one of the best aids we've seen so far while also being very secure in the ear". Having fitted many of ReSound's previous hearing instruments, our Audiologists are confident that the sound quality and noise reduction capabilities of the **be** will be of the highest quality.

A **FREE** trial of the **be** is available for those with an appropriate hearing loss. To find out if you are a suitable candidate contact us on 1300134327.

Our Audiologists will advise you if the **be** is for you.



**For the hearing impaired person that has everything - we've chosen a few stocking fillers that will suit all hearing aid users**

- Pocketsize battery tester - \$13.50
- Activair batter tester - \$22.00
- Dri-Aid dehumidifier (suitable for all hearing aids) - \$16.50
- Hearing aid batteries - \$7.50 (pkt6)
- Bulk hearing aid batteries - \$75 (11pkts)



**FREE** postage during December  
Phone 1300 134327 to order or email [enquiries@hearingbalance.com.au](mailto:enquiries@hearingbalance.com.au)