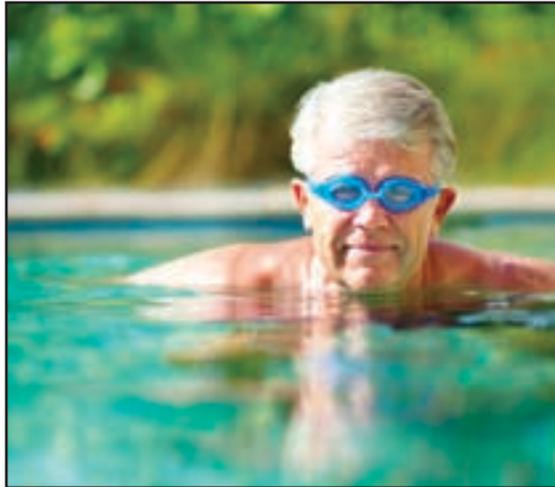


# A dip in the pool is a blood pressure lowering bonanza

A refreshing swim can help lower blood pressure and cholesterol. These are vascular health bonuses for people who are at risk for stroke, the leading cause of disability and the fourth leading cause of death in the United States.

In 2010, 137,000 Americans died of stroke, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). "Swimming is a vascular health bonanza," said David H. Stone, MD, and a member of the Society for Vascular Surgery. "Low-impact swimming provides a total cardiovascular workout. Regular exercise strengthens the heart muscle, resulting in less effort and a decrease in blood pressure."

One in every three Americans over 20 years old -- 74 million Americans -- has high blood pressure according to 2010 statistics from the CDC. One in every six American adults has high cholesterol (more than 250 mg/d L). More American



women than men have high cholesterol.

To reduce high cholesterol levels, exercise and diet are important factors. The American Council on Exercise suggests that adults burn 2000 calories a week from exercise. The lack of regular physical activity results in 250,000 deaths annually, according to a 2003 report in the journal *Circulation*.

As long as the exercise regimen continues, the health benefits remain. After 12 to 14 weeks of a three- to five-days-a-week exercise regimen of 20 to 60 minutes at an intensity of 60 to 90 percent heart rate, bad (LDL) cholesterol can decrease by up to 20 percent according to Livestrong.com.

Another bonus: aerobic exercise can increase good (HDL) cholesterol. In a 2010 University of Western Australia study, 100 women swimmers, ages 50 to 70, lowered their bad cholesterol and lost more inches in the waist and hips than walkers.

Likewise, swimming is easy on the joints and doesn't result in overheating. There are non-invasive screening tests that can detect vascular disease. Medication can treat vascular disease. For free print and electronic vascular health information, visit [VascularWeb.org](http://VascularWeb.org). (NewsUSA)

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# Tips for stress-free traveling with kitty

Whether you're moving across the country or without a cat sitter, you may find yourself driving with cats. "Traveling with your cats can be a rich and rewarding experience," says family travel and lifestyles expert Lynn Hayes.

"The key is doing your research, then creating and executing a plan." Hayes offers the following tips for traveling with cats:

► **Plan ahead.** If you are considering a road trip or flying to your destination, set aside plenty of time to prepare yourself and your feline friend for the journey. Consider how your pet has handled car travel in the past, if only on a trip to the vet. Is he or she comfortable? Do you have a crate or carrier? How long will the trip be? Will other family members or friends be along for the ride?

► **Gather the gear.** You'll need a collar, two leashes and an ID for your cat. A small carrier or crate will also be important — your cat can't cuddle around your feet when you need to step on the brake.



► **Remember their litter.** You might not think a change in your cat's litter will be a big change for your cat, but it may affect the success of your trip. To help your cat feel at home, bring along their favorite cat litter. World's Best Cat Litter fits well into your travel schedule because it is 100 percent all-natural. It is also flushable, making the disposal of litter hassle-free. For more information,

visit [www.worldsbestcatlitter.com](http://www.worldsbestcatlitter.com). Practice makes perfect. If your cat is not familiar with crate travel, consider placing the crate in your home for a few weeks before your departure. Leave the door open, and occasionally toss in a treat or two. Sooner or later, your cat will view the spot as a comfortable retreat. Take the same approach with a leash, if that is not part of your regular routine. Also, consider taking test drives to evaluate how your cat handles the situation. Don't forget to secure the carrier with a seat belt or other restraining method to avoid slipping and sliding within the car.

► **Safety first.** Be sure your cat's identification is firmly attached. Make sure vaccinations are up to date and any necessary medications are packed for the trip. Consider bringing along your cat's medical records, particularly if you are crossing state lines. Remember that hot cars can quickly become dangerous for small animals — don't leave your pet unattended. (NewsUSA)

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# Living comfortably at home in style

As the years pass, Americans in the baby boomer generation are changing the definition of how they want to live comfortably during their later years. Boomers are opting to continue living where they're already secure and happy - right at home. Sometimes with age comes a need for additional safety features in the home - but this generation doesn't want to sacrifice ambiance or style while incorporating these devices. With small upgrades and remodels, it's easy to weave safety products into the design of a room - without making it look institutional. There are many ways to make a master bath or guest bathroom socially sustainable for many years.



Here are some tips:

► **Helpful handles** - Grab bars near the toilet and in the bathing area can make older people feel more stable and secure in the bathroom. But too many grab bar styles look like they belong in a hospital - not a private home. TOTO Transitional Collection Series A grab bars in chrome, brushed nickel and polished nickel finishes with concealed hardware are designed to fit in with the beautiful aesthetics of a bathroom, adding safety without detracting from the look.

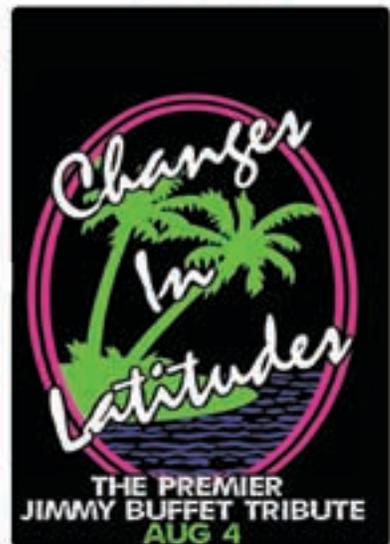
► **Slippery surfaces** - Falling is a great concern for older individuals, so it's a good idea to eliminate any tripping hazards or slippery surfaces where possible. For example, remove rugs that could shift and buckle, and install rubber grip flooring inside the shower or bath for better traction.

► **An extra bit of height** - Taller toilets are easier for baby boomers to use because the height helps with balance. A toilet upgrade incorporating low water usage, easy-to-clean finishes and a soft-close seat will help keep a bathroom in style. The TOTO Legato One-Piece High Efficiency Toilet is universal height and comes with a SanaGloss nano-scale ceramic glaze, which prevents matter and bacteria from sticking to the surfaces, resulting in less needed cleaning.

► **Accessible storage** - Bending over to dig for a beauty product stored way under the sink can be tricky at any age. Consider installing pull-out drawers in lavatory cabinets, or putting storage items in wall cabinets at a higher level to reduce the need to bend for trapped products.

► **Spa-like shower** - The shower is a place to relax, and baby boomers are more than ready to enjoy small luxuries such as a spa-like shower during the retirement years. One way to spruce up the shower is with a multi-spray showerhead, which rotates sprays between massage, mist, spray/massage and pause combos. It has a maximum flow rate of 2.5 gallons per minute - helping to save on water usage and money.

Many baby boomers have plenty of good years left living comfortably in their own homes. With small upgrades using stylish and socially sustainable products, it's possible to stay independent while sharing your home with individuals of all ages. (ARA)



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## Set the scene - and the table - for a perfect summer party

Simply put, summer is entertaining season. Patio parties come together at the last minute and long-planned events fill up the calendar months in advance. But no matter whether you're having an impromptu gathering or an invitation-only celebration, focusing on the flavors and sensory delights of summer will make your party a success, without demanding too much of your time.

The heart of any party is the food and drinks you serve. Summer offers hosts an array of delicious options unlike any other season - when else can you find as much variety and such good quality, often right from the farm? Let that spirit of simplicity guide your approach to putting together a meal, and you'll find that easy-to-prepare recipes can be real crowd-pleasers.

With a trip to the farmers market and a stop at the grocery store, you can get inspiration, as well as all the ingredients you'll need. As you shop, consider what's in season, and when buying things

that are available all year like cheese and meats, look for sustainable options that focus on quality, sustainability and letting natural, unadorned flavors shine through.

Grass-fed beef steaks and blue cheeses are two simple ingredients that, when combined, make a show-stopping centerpiece. Add grilled vegetables adorned with herbs and a seasonal salad with a creamy dressing for a perfectly balanced plate that's easy to put together and focuses on what's in season. Try these recipes for your salad and steak courses and you'll be preparing fuss-free dishes that perfectly capture the essence of good entertaining. For more recipes and grilling tips, visit [www.salemville.com](http://www.salemville.com).



### STEAK WITH GORGONZOLA THYME CRUST

#### Ingredients:

- 2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce
- 2 beef tenderloin or small rib eye steaks (about 6oz. each)
- 1 large or 2 small cloves garlic, minced
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 2 teaspoons fresh thyme, chopped
- 1/2 cup Salemville Amish Gorgonzola cheese, crumbled

#### Directions:

Preheat grill. Spoon Worcestershire sauce over both sides of the steaks and let stand five minutes. Sprinkle garlic and pepper over steaks.

Place steaks on the grill. Grill 3 to 4 inches from heat source three to four minutes per side for medium rare steak.

Remove steaks. Sprinkle thyme, then cheese over steaks. Return to the grill, cheese side up, and grill two minutes, or until the cheese is melted. (ARA)

## Tips for planning a wine tour for your next special event

If you're looking for a unique way to mark an occasion, spend time with friends and family or even host a work event, consider a wine tour. Most wineries are open year round and cater to groups of all sizes. Consider the following to help you plan:

### ► Choose

**a theme:** Many wineries have theme weekends throughout the year that celebrate changing seasons, holidays, local happenings and new vintages. Start with an invitation and then plan everything from food to music around your theme.



### ► Location,

#### location, loca-

**tion:** Make it convenient and choose your tour destination based on the number of wineries and hotels in one area. The Finger Lakes Region in New York is home to more than 200 wineries spread along five organized wine trails that make touring easy. Other growing wine regions such as Napa and Sonoma Valley, Calif., and the Niagara region found between Western New York State and Southern Ontario offer more than 50 wineries for visitors to choose from.

► **Leave it to the professionals:** If you don't know the area, schedule a guided tour. Many Inns and bed and breakfasts, for example, provide overnight packages that include private, luxury wine excursions (as well as picnic lunches and other "wine themed" surprises). Check out Aurora Inn's "Wine Country Getaway" package at [www.aurora-inn.com](http://www.aurora-inn.com) or 10 Fitch's "Spoiled Girl's Getaway Package" at [www.10fitch.com](http://www.10fitch.com).

► **Get in on the action:** Don't just taste the wine, be part of the process. Call the wineries you plan to visit in advance to see how you can roll up your sleeves and get involved in everything from the picking to the stomping. For example, Heart & Hands Wine Company on the Cayuga Lake Wine Trail in Union Springs, New York, offers an annual "Crush Camp." Work alongside the winemaking team by picking fruit, sorting and pressing grapes, performing lab analysis and even the cleaning!

► **Make it a lasting memory:** Take a photo of your group, and turn it into a unique wine label for your favorite wine bottles, or hand them out as inexpensive souvenirs. Photo coasters are another fun, affordable way to remember your tour. Host a tasting event at your own home, and ask friends to share their favorites. Wine touring can be a fun, unique and inexpensive way to spend a day with friends, loved ones or a large group.

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# Local Farms & Farmers Markets

## Tips for local farm market finds and buys

All over the country, people are hopping on the farm-market bandwagon. Buying local, organic food helps the environment, is healthier for your family and supports area businesses. Here's what to look for when you go out shopping:

► **Eat fresh.** You'll find only in-season fruit and vegetables, rather than those flown in from around the world. That can mean no blackberries in the winter months, and also higher quality of what is available. Expect to taste the difference with produce so fresh sometimes it's picked the same day.

► **Discover more.** Farm stands are kicking it up a notch in recent years, selling local prod-

ucts including canned salsa, smoked jerky and baked fruit pies, honey, jams and jellies, and even pancake mix made from locally grown grain and more.

► **Ask and learn.** Farm stand employees are a wealth of knowledge. Find a vegetable you've never eaten? Ask staff how to prepare it, and even what to serve with it.

► **Give.** Farm markets not only help you plan better meals, and save the environment, but buying things made local means less travel for everyone involved. You can also find gift ideas for loved ones. Some offer local wine to sample and buy. (NewsUSA)



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# Keeping snacks healthy and oh so tasty

For those who believe snacks are off-limits, here's a pleasant surprise - snacking can actually benefit a diet. In addition to curbing hunger, The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics notes that healthy snacks help keep your metabolism on track, stabilize blood sugar and provide the opportunity for supplementary nutrient intake.

► **Mix 'n match.** Choose versatile snack options to keep up your new snacking habit. Wasa's new Crisp 'N Light Wholesome Wheat Crackerbread offers fewer calories and portion control. Its versatility allows it to be enjoyed by itself, with a variety of toppings or as a bread substitute. One slice of bread is about 100 calories while three Crackerbread slices total only 70 calories.

If you have a sweet tooth, try this delicious recipe that boasts approximately 110 calories, three grams of protein and only two grams of fat.

Wasa Crisp 'N Light Wholesome Wheat with Fresh Fruit and Yogurt



**Ingredients:**

- 1/2 orange, segmented
- 1/2 kiwi, thinly sliced
- 1 strawberry, thinly sliced
- 1/2 lime, zested and juiced
- 1/2 teaspoon mint, chopped
- 2 tablespoons Greek yogurt
- 2 slices Wasa Crisp 'N Light Wholesome Wheat Crackerbread

**Directions:**

Mix together all fruit and lime zest with lime juice and mint. Spread 2 tablespoons Greek yogurt on each Crackerbread slice. Top with a few tablespoons of the fruit mixture.

\* **Prepare.** Instead of grabbing calorie-laden chips or candy, think of snacks as mini-meals and integrate them into your overall meal plan. By planning ahead and only eating when you are hungry, you will also avoid eating out of boredom or stress, according to The Academy.

The U.S. Dietary Guidelines recommend two to three cups of vegetables daily, so as you purchase vegetables for the week, set aside some for snack time. Try spicing up your normal veggie routine of broccoli and carrots by considering bell peppers or jicama, a root vegetable low in calories and high in vitamin C and potassium.

► **Go (a little) nuts.** The Academy highlights that, in addition to providing protein, folic acid and zinc, nuts have been linked to a reduced risk for heart disease, diabetes and even some forms of cancer. Two tablespoons of raw or dry roasted slivered almonds, walnuts or pecans offers less than 200 calories.

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# Wine pairing 101: Why care about the pair?

Food experts know that the right wine or spirit can enhance the enjoyment of any dish. The perfect marriage of the right wine and a flavorful meal creates a combination that celebrates and enhances the experience of both. Navigating an extensive wine list or cocktail menu should be a journey in experimentation to find your favorite flavors – and never a daunting feat at the table. “Whether you’re dining out or cooking at home, the trick to a satisfying pairing comes from understanding the fundamentals and understanding your personal palate,” says Leigh Merritt, director of bar innovation for Bonefish Grill restaurants.

Here are Merritt’s top tips to consider when creating a great pairing:

► **Understand wine flavors**

Three factors influence the taste of wines: the type of grape, where that grape is grown, and how the wine is processed and handled will affect the flavor notes. The same species of grape grown in California will have different characteristics than one grown in Chile. Grapes fermented in oak will differ from wine in stainless steel. Don’t be afraid to ask questions when purchasing spirits



or ordering drinks at a restaurant, and enjoy learning about the flavors you like.

► **Assess the whole dish**

In general, light-styled wines do pair better with lighter styles of food such as shrimp or scallops, as their delicate flavors harmonize better. However, it’s important to pay attention to all the ingredients on the plate. For instance, grilled shrimp may have a subtle flavor by itself, but when served with the bold flavors of a Chimichurri sauce, the dish takes on a different profile that can taste great with a richer, deeper wine.

► **Why care about the pair?**

A good wine and food pairing will work together to bring out the best flavors in each. The wine shouldn’t overpower the food, nor should the food

overpower the wine. This delicate balance can be achieved by using either complementary or contrasting flavors.

► **Complementary flavors**

Some pairs come naturally, like fresh seafood and lemon, or fresh sashimi and wasabi. The similar flavors work together to create a classic duo. When dealing with libations, complementary flavors similarly yield a symbiotic, balanced result. This strategy brings wines together with dishes that share similar notes, such as an earthy pinot noir and robust Chicken Marsala or Fontina Chop. The combination of tastes has a lot of synergy and smooth transition from food to drink.

► **Contrasting flavors**

Wine can also have a cleansing effect on your palate, and using contrasting flavors can make a meal very exciting. To create a good contrast, remember that opposites attract, and pair foods and wines that have divergent traits, such as a crisp sauvignon blanc and a fresh Grilled Grouper with a Lemon Butter sauce. The crisp acidity of the wine cuts through the creaminess of the sauce and gives a different, refreshing sensation for the palate. (ARA)

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# Tips to help seniors avoid identity thieves

Two types of identity theft that have targeted seniors in the past are phone scams and medical fraud. The FBI advises seniors to be wary of telemarketers and phone solicitations, since money lost through a phone call is very difficult to get back. The bureau recommends taking precautions when doing business over the phone, including:

- ▶ Asking for written material before committing to any charitable request or special offer. If you receive written material, review it with someone you trust.
- ▶ Avoid dealing with companies you don't know, and research unfamiliar companies through consumer agencies like the Better Business Bureau, state attorney general or National Fraud Information Center.
- ▶ Know who you're talking to. Ask for the person's full name, business title, phone number, physical address, mailing address and business license number. Verify the information before any transactions take place.



- ▶ Don't pay in advance for services, and be wary of high-pressure tactics that require you to act immediately in order to receive a special price or offer.

Medical fraud is another area of particular risk for seniors, who tend to have more doctor visits, hospital trips and prescriptions, and since Medicare can be confusing and complicated.

The FBI offers these tips for avoiding health insurance fraud:

- ▶ Never sign blank claim forms or give a medical provider blanket authorization to bill for services.
- ▶ Make sure you understand what your medical providers will charge and how much of it you will be expected to pay out of pocket. Review your coverage with your health insurance company so you understand what your financial responsibilities are.
- ▶ Don't do business with anyone selling medical equipment door-to-door or over the phone, or who tell you that you can get services or equipment for free.
- ▶ Provide your insurance or Medicare information only to those who have given you a medical service.
- ▶ Keep accurate records of all your medical appointments and prescriptions.

Finally, if you're having trouble keeping track of your medical information, ask for help from a trusted friend or family member. (ARA)

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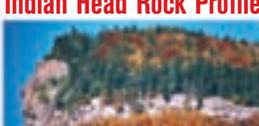
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# Tabletop gardens are edible centerpieces

Growing your own produce elevates the popular buying-local trend to a new sphere. Starting your very own edible garden can be a fun and economical way to serve the freshest herbs, greens and vegetables. For those seeking more gardening space beyond the backyard, "table-top" gardening is the new container gardening solution.

Container gardening for produce offers gardeners ways to grow all sorts of plants indoors and out. For example, decorate a table or bench inside your home with beautiful pots, filled with scented herbs or even crisp lettuce greens. Put your creativity to good use and find containers you can easily recycle.

If you have a deck or patio, you can expand to larger containers, and thus, larger plants like tomatoes and peppers. If space is limited, see if your local garden center carries any dwarf vegetable varieties. Also, keep in mind that vining plants like cucumbers or squash can be grown up out of containers by simply



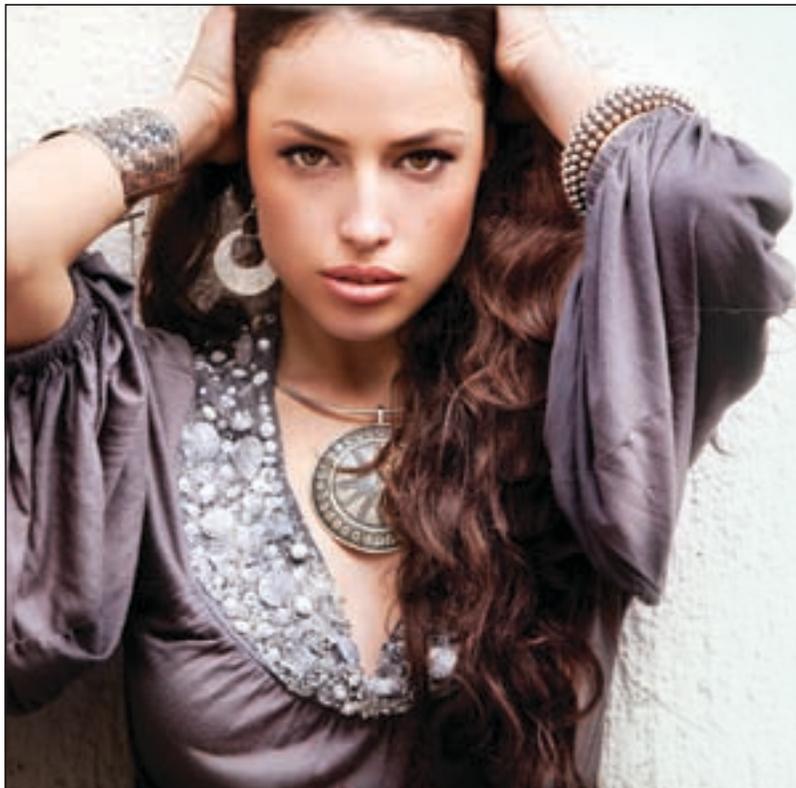
placing the pot near a fence or trellis for vertical support.

Remember the delight herbs bring to your menus. Herbs are easy to grow both indoors and out, and adapt extremely well to containers. If you are an herb garden beginner, try the Miracle-Gro Culinary Herb Garden, which contains everything needed - Miracle-Gro Potting Mix, a pot and seed disks - to grow herbs on a window sill or on your kitchen table.

To help beautify your garden, consider mixing in edible blooming flowers. Pansies and violets are two beautiful

and delicious blooms that can be tucked right into container gardens. In order to eat these flowers, they must be grown from seed. Both varieties grow well in the cooler spring and later fall months. These blooms not only add a mild sweet flavor to salads, candies and teas, but also add decoration as well. Once you have containers, veggies and herbs chosen, it is time to get started planting. Use Miracle-Gro Expand 'n Gro Concentrated Planting Mix to help your plants grow strong and thrive. This mix is lightweight, and when water is added, expands up to three times, giving plants the perfect soil mixture needed for nutrients and root growth.

Starting a table-top or container garden is a great way for any homeowner to get into the gardening spirit. Start your garden early this year, and soon you will be inviting friends and family over to enjoy delicious meals with vegetables and herbs grown in your kitchen or back patio.(ARA)



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# Seven effective habits to prevent hearing loss

Hearing loss is common, but the perception that hearing loss is only caused by aging is incorrect. More than 36 million American have hearing loss. Changing lifestyle habits, and treating a variety of health conditions can help to prevent hearing loss.

▶ **1. Noise**

Exposure to dangerous levels of noise can occur at work, home and in many recreational activities. Limit exposure time to noisy activities.

▶ **2. iPod/MP3 Players**

You can download apps to ensure noise exposure through your iPod does not exceed dangerous decibel levels.

▶ **3. Diabetes**

The National Institute of Health (NIH) has found that hearing loss is twice as common in people with diabetes.

▶ **4. Smoking**

Smokers are nearly 70 percent more likely than nonsmokers to suffer hearing loss.

▶ **5. Cardiovascular disease**



Growing evidence suggests a link between hearing loss and poor cardiovascular health

▶ **6. Earwax (Cerumen)**

Accidental rupture of the eardrum or plugging the ear with earwax can occur from inserting cotton swabs in the ear

canal.

▶ **7. See an audiologist**

For more information about hearing loss and a free online hearing screen, visit Audiology Awareness Campaign at 888-833-EARS (3277) or [audiology-awareness.com](http://audiology-awareness.com). (ARA)

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