

AUDIOLOGY AT NORTHERN ILLINOIS ENT

It may be hard to believe, but one in five Americans suffers from hearing loss of some kind. That breaks down to around 48 million people, and not all of these individuals are seniors—hearing loss is common in middle-aged and young adults. Even children are not immune. With so many affected, it's a wonder it takes some people years to seek out help from the specialists in diagnosing and treating hearing loss and related disorders—audiologists.

Erin Brodnick, M.S., CCC-A, is the audiologist on staff at Northern Illinois ENT. She collaborates with Dr. Joseph Scianna to find the cause of and proper treatment for hearing loss in patients from six months to 60-plus years of age.

Brodnick has been a part of the team at Northern Illinois ENT since



2010, but she has almost 20 years of experience in the field. She earned her Masters in Audiology from Miami University in Ohio and spent almost a year with Veterans Affairs. Just prior to joining Scianna's practice, she worked with him for seven years at Loyola University Medical Center.

From diagnosing ringing in the ears or sudden hearing loss to fitting hearing

aids or personal FM systems, Brodnick works side-by-side with Scianna and other area physicians. "Doctors can direct refer to audiology at Northern Illinois ENT without going through Dr. Scianna," she explained. "Though the majority of my patients come from inside this practice, I do provide my services to general practitioners, internists, and other doctors who don't have an audiologist in house."

Thanks to the state-of-the-art technology at Northern Illinois ENT, Brodnick's services are comprehensive and responsive. "In our new location on Midlands Court, we have an on-site hearing test booth equipped for otoacoustic emissions testing for newborns and visual reinforcement audiometry for very young children who can't raise their hands when they hear a beep, in addition to standard hearing testing," said Brodnick. "And we provide results same-day."

Brodnick is also a certified provider of Neuromonics, an innovative treatment for persistent ringing in the ears, known as tinnitus. "Neuromonics is a unique approach because it uses a programming device to teach the brain how to re-learn

sounds," Brodnick explained. "Basically, it trains the brain to place less consciousness on the ringing. It's the most effective treatment available for this condition and because it requires special certification and training, many places don't offer it."

As far as hearing aids go, Brodnick and Northern Illinois ENT provide patients with a range of options, including the most cutting-edge technologies available in hearing amplification. Jan Oncken, retired human resources manager, has suffered from Meniere's disease for 35 years and came to Brodnick for the innovative CROS-BICROS aid.

"The doctors I was seeing in Naperville had not done a hearing test in quite some time, so I went to Erin," Oncken said. "The test showed what I had known for some time—that almost all the hearing in my left ear was gone. She suggested the CROS-BICROS device, which is designed for people with hearing loss in only one ear. There is a transmitter in my right ear that carries the sound to my left—it's amazing. For the first time in 35 years, I can hear in stereo."

Oncken was so pleased with the audiology services she received at Northern Illinois ENT that she encouraged her husband, Steven Hartman, to switch to the practice to supplement his thyroid cancer treatment.



"Dr. Scianna immediately referred me to Erin for a hearing test and she discovered that I had lost all my high frequency hearing," said Hartman. "I now have aids in both ears, so my wife and I can finally understand each other clearly after decades. Doctors I had seen in the past were not as proactive in making sure I had hearing tests—Dr. Scianna and Erin were so thorough."

"It's a great asset that Dr. Scianna and I work in tandem because people are able to get their hearing tests right away and diagnosis is known immediately, as opposed to when a patient is referred out and has to wait several days for the test, then several more for the diagnosis," Brodnick said.

Whether you need a Bluetooth device that interacts with your hearing aid due to Illinois' new hands-free driving law now in effect, or you're just tired of saying "what?" in every conversation-- Brodnick and the audiology department at Northern Illinois ENT are here for you.



"My main goal is to educate people on how common hearing loss is and what is available to help them improve their quality of life," said Brodnick.

"It's so important to understand that hearing loss is not always associated with age. If you think you might need a hearing test, don't wait to get checked."

To learn more about Erin Brodnick and the audiology services at Northern Illinois ENT, call (815) 758-8106. ■

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