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OTOSCAN[®] 3D DIGITAL EAR SCANNING SOLUTION FROM NATUS HELPS AUDIOLOGY PRACTICES PERSONALIZE, ENGAGE AND DIFFERENTIATE WITH CUSTOM EAR PIECES

Otoscan[®] 3D digital ear scanning technology from Natus, formerly Otometrics, is transforming the way audiologists and dispensers provide hearing care. More than just an alternative to manual earmolds using silicone impressions, Otoscan enables audiologists to further personalize client counseling during the hearing aid selection and fitting process. Otoscan streamlines the production of custom in-ear pieces, turning images of the ear into 3D digital files that are uploaded to the Otocloud[®] portal for immediate use by earmold and hearing instrument manufacturers to produce custom ear pieces.

In addition to enhancing patient counseling, Otoscan provides clinics with operational and business benefits that can lead to increased efficiencies and patient satisfaction. Gardena Hearing Center, serving the South Bay area of Metro Los Angeles, actively promotes the adoption of Otoscan technology on their website, Facebook page and in their newsletter.

“An increasing number of patients are coming to us specifically for Otoscan, often after dealing with traditional impressions that may have been uncomfortable or unsuccessful,” said Gardena Hearing Aid Dispenser Samuel Delgado.



Otoscan[®] 3D Digital Ear Scanning Solution

“Any time an adult custom mold is called for, we turn to Otoscan. It’s the future of ear impressions.”

Marcia Blank, Au.D., Owner,
Gardena Hearing Center

“Patients also really like the interactive process and watching the images being created in real-time.”

For Gardena Hearing Center owner and Audiologist Marcia Blank, Au.D., Otoscan not only saves time and money by reducing shipping and handling costs, but it also serves as a counseling tool that helps differentiate her practice and satisfy clients.

“Any time an adult custom mold is called for, we turn to Otoscan. It’s the future of ear impressions,” said Blank, whose clinic began using Otoscan in the summer of 2019. “It’s a real positive for my patients who have had difficulty getting a good fit,

including anatomically challenging ears.”

Blank recently faced a fitting challenge from a patient with a mastoid cavity resulting from mastoidectomy.

“There’s a risk of having an ear impression get stuck, so I was excited knowing I could use Otoscan instead,” Blank explained. “Another patient had three pairs of unsuccessful impressions over four years because they couldn’t go deep enough in her left ear. She came across our Otoscan online, scheduled an appointment, and we were able to get a highly accurate 3D impression for

a comfortable, custom and effective hearing aid.”

For lead audiologist Adam Chell of Sevenoaks Hearing in the United Kingdom, Otoscan isn't just about taking an earmold. “It's a demonstration of your clinic's interest in innovative technology,” observed Chell. “If you get Otoscan, you should use it at every opportunity.”

“The patients are always fascinated by Otoscan. I've yet to meet someone that hasn't been impressed with the technology. Otoscan is a real differentiator that positions us as a premium hearing care provider.”

Adam Chell, Clinical Director,
Sevenoaks Hearing, United Kingdom

Chell likes the fact that once a patient's ears are scanned in, they are on record in case the patient needs time to think about proceeding with hearing aids. The patient can then just phone in the order instead of coming in for another appointment. It also means replica molds, lost molds, or hearing aids can be processed without the need for repeat impressions.

“The patients are always fascinated by Otoscan. I've yet to meet someone that hasn't been impressed with the technology,” Chell said. “Otoscan is a real differentiator that positions us as a premium hearing care provider. I've had some incredible results that have kept the client from credit returning. In this sense, the scanner has quickly paid for itself.”

At Kabel Hearing Center, with locations in Florence and Decatur, Alabama, Board Certified Hearing Instruments Specialist Ryan Kabel grew up in the hearing aid business. Working with his father, Kabel learned how to make custom hearing



Otoscan® - The Future of Hearing Care

aids at age 15. He has been dispensing and fitting hearing aids ever since. An early adopter, Kabel purchased the first retail Otoscan in the nation.

“I saw the early technology, and I believed in the concept,” Kabel reasoned. “I also invested in it because we were having numerous sore ear and fit issues, plus Otoscan will help me compete and better differentiate my centers now that we're up against OTC hearing aid sales.”

New FDA regulations to be issued this year are expected to clear the way for OTC hearing aid sales for adults with mild to moderate hearing loss.¹

With the benefits Otoscan provides, Kabel feels he's well prepared for the future. “Patients who have Otoscan performed are wowed; they are so glad and amazed at the technology. Even patients in their 90s have been amazed watching their ears be imaged and built in 3D on the computer screen,” noted Kabel.

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Ryan Kabel, HIS, Owner,
Kabel Hearing Center

Kabel has also been able to compare traditional impressions with the new 3D Otoscan. He explained that with traditional molds, there is no way of knowing how much the silicone distorted or stretched the soft cartilage in the ear canal. “You put the impression material in, you pull it out, and you have your impression to model the custom piece from,” described Kabel.

But with Otoscan, he is seeing dramatically better results.

“We've been able to compare custom fittings from traditional mold impressions directly with fittings made from the scans produced by Otoscan, and most of the time, it doesn't even look like the same ear,” said Kabel. “Otoscan gives you an exact image of the size and shape of the ear canal compared to something that is a material being pushed out of a syringe or cartridge to fill the ear canal. I have come to the belief that we just had no idea how much distortion was being created by the insertion of silicone, no matter what viscosity was used.”

Uploading and ordering through the subscription-based Otocloud has proven to be a major operational benefit for Kabel, enabling his centers to send the patient scan to any manufacturer they want without having the patient come back months later for a fitting.

Otoscan is a complete digital scanning solution that gives audiology centers powerful new ways to attract and convert more clients. ♦

Visit www.hearing-balance.natus.com/Otoscan for additional information, or to schedule a product demo.

Reference:

1. Bleiberg L. FDA Clears Way For OTC Hearing Aids. AARP. <https://www.aarp.org/health/conditions-treatments/info-2019/otc-hearing-aids.html>. Published June 6, 2019. Accessed January 16, 2020.