

Choosing Hearing Aids, What You Should Know

Hearing loss has many causes. Fortunately, hearing aids can reduce the effects of hearing loss. Although hearing aids can benefit many people, it's important to keep in mind that no hearing aid can restore normal hearing. The benefits depend on many factors, including the degree of hearing loss.

Initial Evaluation

A hearing evaluation should only be completed by a professional licensed to dispense hearing aids in your state. The results will show the amount and type of hearing loss. Your hearing healthcare provider will also check how well you hear and understand speech.

Considerations About Hearing Aids

Your listening needs, physical abilities and budget concerns are the most important considerations when choosing hearing aids.

Here are some additional issues to consider.

- **One versus Two Hearing Aids.** 99% of patients with a hearing aid in both ears will need a hearing aid for both ears. There are some exceptions to this, and your hearing healthcare professional will discuss those with you.
- **Style.** The three main styles of hearing aids are behind-the-ear, in-the-ear and in-the-canal. The style choice depends on many factors. The final decision will be made based on the degree of your hearing loss, your listening needs, your physical limitations (if any) and your personal preference.

- **Technical Considerations.** The technical characteristics of hearing aids are very important. The amount of gain or amplification provided at each frequency, the loudest sound that the hearing aid can produce, and specialized signal processing technology must be selected on an individual basis.
- Some hearing aids come with adjustable controls, raised volume control wheels, tamper-resistant battery compartments and options that make them easy to use with other listening devices.

Testing Your Hearing Aids

Hearing aids can be evaluated in several ways.

The technique used most frequently is known as probe-microphone testing. A small tube is placed into the ear canal along with the hearing aid or earmold. Then, sound amplified by the hearing aid can be measured in the ear canal. This technique is a precise way of predicting how the hearing aid will improve listening to speech.

Follow-up Appointments

A 30-day adjustment period after you are fit with new hearing aids is recommended by the FDA. During this time the hearing aid should be used in every-day situations to determine if any adjustments or changes are necessary. Your hearing healthcare professional should be consulted if you have any concerns or problems.

After you have been fitted with your hearing aids, it is important to have your hearing and the performance of your hearing aids checked periodically. You want to make sure your hearing aid provide you with better hearing for years to come!