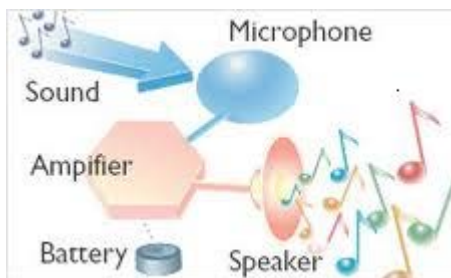




Hearing Aids

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A hearing aid is a device that amplifies and adjusts sound to allow for improved communication. It consists of a microphone which converts sound waves to electrical signals, a processor which amplifies and shapes the sound, a receiver that converts the signal back to sound, and a battery compartment.



What kinds of hearing aids are there?

Hearing aids come in all different sizes and shapes. The smallest is a completely in-the-ear hearing aid; the largest is a behind-the-ear hearing aid.



The behind-the-ear or over-the-ear hearing aids and mini behind-the-ear hearing aids can be adjusted for the individual wearing it, and the in-the-ear and in-the-canal hearing aids are custom fit to the wearer.

Hearing aids come with different technology, however most are now digital. These hearing aids have a microprocessor that analyzes sound and adjusts incoming speech to reduce the interference of background noise. Some have directional technology, noise suppression technology and may have telecoils (t-coils) to aid in listening to cell phones, MP3 players, etc.

Most Important for the Customer's Satisfaction is the Time Spent with the Hearing Aid Provider!

Make sure the provider:

- Provides a comprehensive hearing evaluation—speech discrimination tests and loudness discomfort level should be included.
- Allows for follow up visits. The manufacturer's recommended settings don't work for everyone. Also reviewing information helps the wearer to retain all the information about the device.
- Provides ways for consumers to learn about assistive technology, communication repair strategies, understanding the audiogram and care of the hearing aid.

- Explains if the hearing aid has a telecoil and how that technology can assist them in reducing background noise and how it works with assistive listening devices and loop systems.
- Provides at least a 45 day *supervised* trial period, if the hearing aid is not working for that you, the cost of the hearing aid could be refunded.
- Answers all your questions.

Some things to remember about using hearing aids:

- Don't expect the hearing aid to make hearing "normal."
- How much hearing loss a person has is related to how well a person understands amplified speech.
- An older person, in general, needs a higher signal/noise ratio, and therefore may have a more difficult time hearing in noisy environments with a hearing aid. Ask how a t-coil may help.
- Don't give up! It might take some time to get used to wearing hearing aids.

If you think you might benefit from a hearing aid...

Don't stall. Seek out a hearing service provider by visiting an Audiologist or a doctor who is an Ear, Nose and Throat specialist. They can determine if a hearing aid is what you need or if another approach is more suitable.

It's ok to shop around. Call and ask questions about the service. Make sure they offer a variety of brands.

If the cost is prohibitive, there are ways to find help. Ask our office for our Fact Sheet on Financial Assistance for Hearing Aids or go to <http://www.hearingloss.org/content/financial-assistance-programs-foundations>.