

# DO YOU THINK YOU MIGHT NEED HEARING AIDS?

## HERE ARE THE TOP 5 THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW BEFORE YOU BUY!

- 1) **A THOROUGH HEARING EVALUATION IS THE FIRST STEP.** A comprehensive hearing test provided by an Audiologist will determine not only if you have hearing loss but the severity of loss, the type of loss, possible causes, if any medical condition is indicated, and treatment options. If hearing aids are recommended, a hearing evaluation will help determine realistic expectations so the benefits, as well as the limitations, of hearing aids can be appropriately discussed. **Beware of advertisements for FREE hearing tests.** You may pay for them through high-pressure sales tactics at the very least. Keep in mind, the goal of these free tests is to sell you a hearing aid, not diagnose and treat your hearing loss. Diagnostic hearing evaluations are covered by most health insurance plans, including Medicare. (NOTE: A hearing “*screening*”, such as one you might receive at a health fair, is always free and uses a simple pass/fail criteria to determine if hearing is within the normal range or not. If a person fails the screening, a comprehensive hearing test is recommended.)
- 2) **SEE AN AUDIOLOGIST.** By definition, **an Audiologist is *the* healthcare professional** specializing in identifying, diagnosing, treating and monitoring disorders of the auditory system. Audiologists are university and clinically trained to diagnose, manage and/or treat hearing problems. An Audiologist has earned a Master’s or Doctoral Degree. Not everyone who dispenses hearing aids is an Audiologist. A Hearing Instrument Specialist is a licensed dispenser; however, their scope of practice limits them to provide hearing tests solely for the purpose of selling and fitting hearing aids. If you are not certain, ask about credentials.
- 3) **CHOOSE A PROFESSIONAL WHOM YOU TRUST.** This is probably **the most important choice you will make** on the journey to better hearing. Choose someone you feel comfortable with in discussing your hearing loss concerns, questions, hopes, and even fears; someone you feel confident in their willingness to listen, their skill to address your concerns, and their sincere desire to improve your quality of life through better hearing. The person you choose as your professional hearing healthcare provider can make the difference between being a satisfied hearing aid user and a disgruntled hearing aid buyer!. Oh, and *never* buy hearing aids through mail order, from an individual or off the internet! This is illegal, unethical and is not in your best interest.
- 4) **CHOOSE A CLINIC THAT WORKS WITH MULTIPLE HEARING AID MANUFACTURERS.** Though most hearing aids are similar in the basic components, size, and shape, some manufacturer brands include features or technology that will work best for particular hearing losses or hearing needs. It is important to have options. Franchised companies are often limited to one manufacturer or brand of hearing aid. If a particular hearing aid does not work well for you, the provider needs to have other choices so **your specific needs can best be met.**
- 5) **BE A WISE CONSUMER.** Coupons and discounts, including discounts through health insurance plans, are often based on inflated prices and limited choices. You may find yourself getting less and paying more! **Buying into misleading claims of discounts, specials and promotional pricing may cost you more than you think.** You should never feel pressured into making a decision based on coupons and limited time offers. Choose a reputable clinic that does not use pricing gimmicks but offers fair, reasonable pricing to everyone, everyday!

Compliments of **Patriot Center for Hearing Loss, LLC**, and Dr. Teresa Stepp, Audiologist. Located in Jefferson City. Check us out at [www.patriotcenterforhearingloss.com](http://www.patriotcenterforhearingloss.com) where many of your questions can be answered through our articles and newsletters on hearing loss and hearing aids. If you would prefer to have your questions answered in person, just give us a call at 865-471-0466 or toll free at 1-877-482-4327. We look forward to hearing from you!