

## **I Admit It! I Need Hearing Aids. What Can I Expect?**

Admitting that you may need hearing aids is not an easy thing to do but once you finally make the decision to move forward, a whole new world will be open to you. I understand that making the decision to get hearing aids can be intimidating. The unknown is scary enough but the horror stories from people who very vocally express displeasure with their hearing aids doesn't exactly help the situation. Or perhaps you had a bad experience with hearing aids yourself at some point in the past. It is important to know that hearing aids have improved drastically over the years. Though no hearing aid can restore hearing, new technology and innovative ideas are continuously expanding the limits of what hearing aids can do. If you tried hearing aids before without much success, you should seriously consider trying them again. As far as other people's negative experiences, it is not always the fault of the instrument. Sometimes, it is a case of the user not giving themselves time to adjust or sometimes they did not follow recommendations (such as using only one hearing aid when two were recommended). As the saying goes, "sometimes it is the hunter and not the gun." Part of the audiologist's job is to help you through this process so that you can allow the hearing aids to reach their optimum level of benefit. This may take some time so all we ask is that you are patient and willing to give them time to do their thing. You will find it well worth the effort. And with advanced technology and new stylish designs, hearing aids are easier than ever to use. Some patients find them so comfortable, they actually forget they are wearing them!

Another exciting thing about hearing aids is that not only can they help you hear better, they can actually improve your social, emotional and physical well-being. Untreated hearing loss can lead to depression and isolation, feelings of frustration, loneliness and anger. It can also lead to misunderstandings and hurt feelings. Did you know that it is physically impossible to smile when you are yelling? People with untreated hearing loss often mistake loudness for hostility when family members have to raise their voices in order to be heard.

The good news is, when hearing loss is treated through the use of hearing aids, the wearer and their family and friends notice a vast improvement in communication with less depression, frustration and misunderstandings. Many people who had stopped going places, doing things and visiting people realize they are now able to enjoy those things once again.

Now that you are ready to try hearing aids, your audiologist will recommend which hearing aid is best for you with careful consideration to your hearing loss, your listening needs, your personal preferences and financial considerations. But this is just the beginning. She will establish an open line of communication, building rapport for a long-standing relationship so that you are comfortable asking questions and reporting any concerns you may have. Learning to hear again is a process but it can be a wonderful journey. Together, you and your audiologist can make the transition to better hearing

something to celebrate rather than dread. Once you are fit with hearing aids, it is important to understand how to use them and take care of them properly. The fit should be comfortable. The sound should also be comfortable but will take some getting used to. Remember, you have not been hearing well for quite a while so your idea of 'normal' is skewed. With hearing aids, you will notice that you hear differently. Different is good. The way you were hearing was not normal but muffled or unclear, even though you had adapted to it and begun to accept it as normal. You were actually missing out on sounds and words that you should have been hearing. With hearing aids, sounds will be clearer. Loud sounds will still be loud but should not be uncomfortably loud. Soft sounds will still be soft but should be audible. You will find that you hear *better* in noisy situations but you cannot expect to hear *well* in difficult listening environments. Even people with good hearing do not hear well in noise. The audiologist will help you set realistic expectations and explain not only the benefits of hearing aids but the limitations. The hearing aids can be adjusted as needed to improve sound quality...noises can be turned down but it is important to understand that noise is a part of life. Noise in and of itself is not a bad thing and often relays important information about what is going on around you. Your hearing aids will be adjustable via a computer program. We will be able to adjust specific sounds based on your input regarding your listening experiences after wearing the hearing aids for a week or two. You will be given a 30-day trial period to be sure you are happy with your new hearing aids. During the 30 days, it is especially important to communicate with the audiologist so appropriate adjustments to the hearing aid settings can be made but even after the 30 days, when it has been established that you are satisfied with your new hearing aids, you will still have the opportunity to have them adjusted as needed. Your audiologist will also provide cleaning and general inspection of the aid periodically at no additional cost to you. The details of your warranty and trial period will be discussed at the time of your order.

Congratulations on taking that first, very important step of admitting you may need hearing aids. I hope you look at this venture as one of excitement and welcome the opportunity for better hearing. Better hearing. Doesn't that sound good?



Compliments of: Patriot Center for Hearing Loss, LLC  
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