

10 Questions to ask your Audiologist

How much hearing loss do I need to have before hearing aids are required?

Because of vast improvements in hearing aid technology over the past few years we are now able to successfully fit even the mildest hearing loss with hearing aids. How soon people decide to get hearing aids will depend on how much they or others are bothered by their hearing loss, the impact the hearing loss is having on their quality of life, and the effectiveness of available solutions.

Will wearing hearing aids make my hearing worse or my ears “lazy”?

There is a common misconception that wearing hearing aids somehow makes your ears lazy or causes your hearing to deteriorating. Hearing aids cannot make your hearing worse and in fact they do quite the opposite, stimulates the remaining hearing and amplifies sounds the brain has not been receiving. This has the effect of “exercising” the brain so that it becomes better at recognizing speech and filtering unwanted noise.

What style of hearing aid is right for me?

Hearing aids come in two different styles in-the-ear and behind-the-ear aids. Ask your audiologist to explain the pros and cons of each type and why he has chosen a particular type for you. The appropriate style to meet your needs may be dependent of the amount of hearing loss you have, the particular situations where you want the hearing aids to help, your vision and dexterity and the appearance of the hearing aids. Once these things have been assessed by your audiologist, he or she will be able to help you decide which style to choose.

What is telecoil and should I have it in my hearing aid?

A telecoil is a small magnetic inductive device which is included in many hearing aids. When the telecoil is used, the hearing aid microphone is switched off and the voice is heard directly into the hearing aid. Telecoil is used in theatres and cinemas, churches, conference rooms and meeting places which have a loop system installed. The telecoil can greatly improve the listener’s ability to hear with their hearing aids in these situations by picking up the sound directly from the magnetic loop. Your audiologist can tell you whether a telecoil is an option.

Do I need hearing aids in both ears?

If you have a hearing loss in both ears, it is very highly recommended that you wear two hearing aids. Although there are many people who still wear just one hearing aid, with the help of continued research we are now aware that this is not usually the best option. Just like wearing lenses on both eyes when you get glasses, it is important to make the most use of the hearing in both ears.

Hearing “in stereo” with two hearing aids provides a better balance of sound and a more natural listening experience. It means you can pick up sounds from both sides and easily tell the direction the sounds are coming from. This is particularly important when listening in background noise when the brain compares information from both ears to help focus on the person who is speaking and filter out unwanted noise

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Are the most expensive hearing aids the best for me?

There are various levels of hearing aid technology with a range of prices attached. Some hearing aids are very sophisticated with a large number of features and are priced accordingly. Other hearing aids are simpler and relatively inexpensive. To select the right technology for you, your audiologist needs to thoroughly assess your lifestyle, daily activities and listening needs. If you are usually at home listening to your partner or the television, you may not require some of the features available in more expensive aids and you are likely to cope well with lower cost options. If, however, you are working, or often in noisy environments or meetings, or regularly find yourself in social situations, you will need to spend more to get the features you need to hear well in these difficult listening situations.

What is a digital hearing aid?

The word "digital" simply means computerized. A digital hearing aid will contain a tiny computer chip which amplifies sounds in a specific way. Digital hearing aid technology has now been around for many years and almost all hearing aids available on the market now are digital.

Will my hearing aids whistle?

The whistling noise which is made by hearing aids is known as feedback. Feedback is caused by amplified sound coming out of the speaker of the hearing aid and getting back into the hearing aid microphone. The microphone and speaker on a hearing aid are very close together, feedback from hearing aids can be hard to control. New advanced hearing aids have special features to help get rid of feedback. Properly fitted hearing aids should not whistle when in your ear.

Will hearing aids be difficult for me to operate?

Hearing aids need not be difficult to operate. However, if your vision is poor or your fingers are arthritic, you may need to select a type of hearing aid which is easier to manage. Some hearing aids are fully automatic with no controls at all. Others have a small pushbutton for adjustment or a remote control. Your audiologist will teach you how to insert and remove the hearing aids and operate the controls. With practice and perseverance you should be able to do this quite easily.

I have hearing aids but still find it really hard to hear in some situations.

If you have very significant hearing loss or particular difficulties with processing and understanding speech, even the most expensive hearing aids may not help you enough in some situations. If this is the case for you, you should ask your audiologist about other equipment which might help you hear. A very effective solution is an FM system which involves a transmitter that picks up speech and sends it via radio waves to a receiver on your hearing aid. Other accessories such as plug in microphones and adapters which allow direct audio input from your television or stereo may also be useful.

**Both you and your audiologist want the same outcome – to aid your hearing.
The more you can tell them about your hearing needs & the more they
can tell you about your options, the more successful the outcome will be.**

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