

How Can I Tell What I Should and Should Not Hear?

Excellent question! Now that you have hearing aids, will you hear everything all the time? No, nor should you expect to since people with normal hearing use the words, “Huh” and “What” too. Use your spouse or a friend as a guide as to what should be understandable. If they are experiencing difficulty with conversation then certainly you will have problems. You will still experience more difficulty than those with normal hearing; however, your clarity of speech and understanding will be much improved with hearing aids.

Expect Better Hearing

Hearing aids provide most people with significant hearing improvements. They can make it easier to hear people who speak with a soft voice, and you should not have to strain or listen as hard. How much benefit you receive will depend on your hearing loss, experience with hearing aids, motivation, hearing aid technology, and use of communication strategies. Hearing aids are not a cure for hearing loss; however, they can definitely improve your hearing and your quality of life. Everyone you interact with on a regular basis will notice and reap the benefits.

How Can I be Guaranteed That I will Benefit From Hearing Aids?

The hearing aid experience is provided to patients for an adjustment period of two months to ensure a significant lifestyle improvement. Your Audiologist has your best interests at heart, and will work to make this adjustment period a positive experience.

For more information, schedule an appointment at the nearest office.

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Hearing Aid Expectations

Congratulations on your decision to consider hearing aids. Your first questions are probably: “What can I expect from hearing aids?” and “How will my hearing be different with hearing aids?” This brochure will provide a general overview of what to expect with hearing aids.

Improvement in Hearing

Hearing aids will improve your hearing. You will be able to hear voices at a more comfortable level, the television volume can be turned down, and listening should be less stressful. More importantly, you and your family will notice an improvement in your ability to engage in conversation. Frustration generated by communication difficulty with your family and friends will lessen. Will hearing aids restore your hearing to normal? There is no substitute for normal hearing; however, the use of hearing aids will improve your quality of life significantly.

Your next question may be, “Why can’t hearing aids simply amplify enough to get my hearing back to normal?” The answer is enmeshed in the complexity of how a hearing loss occurs. In addition to the loss of volume, hearing loss also may cause a reduction in the clarity of speech.

How much improvement you obtain with hearing aids depends on many factors. Your hearing loss, speech understanding, and motivation will all be important factors.

Hearing Aids Make Things Sound “Different”

When you first listen with hearing aids, “familiar” sounds will appear different. Your voice is amplified and so are the voices of others. The pitch of someone’s voice may sound different since your hearing aids amplify pitches you may not have heard for a long time. Over time you will adapt to these changes and they will become “normal”. This adaptation will occur only if you wear your hearing aids on a full-time basis.

Hearing Aids Put You Back in Touch With Sounds Around You

Most individuals experience a slow decrease in their hearing sensitivity over time, and become accustomed to a quieter lifestyle. Many normal environmental sounds become very soft or inaudible without hearing aids. Family members and friends then increasingly become frustrated since they find themselves having to repeat portions of conversations. During the first few weeks of wearing your hearing aids, you will notice many environmental sounds again (e.g., the refrigerator running, road noise when you’re driving, newspaper pages turning, and sounds of footsteps). Your brain will acclimate to these new sounds and you will notice them less and less as you wear your hearing aids. The ability to hear these soft sounds is important for safety, and gradually you will notice improvement in your hearing even when noise is present. Hearing aids also will allow you to localize sound, an important way to improve the clarity of speech in quiet and noisy situations.

Background Noise-Will Hearing Aids Help?

One of the most frustrating situations, especially for those with hearing loss, is hearing conversation in the presence of background noise (e.g., restaurant, large groups, etc.). The ability to understand a conversation in noisy environments is severely affected by a hearing loss. Hearing loss makes it very difficult to extract the voice of the person you are trying to hear in background noise.

Hearing aids can help you hear better in these situations to an extent. In a very loud situation, like a busy, crowded restaurant, hearing aids may not help as much as you would like. There are specific tests to assess these situations, and features in hearing aids can be adjusted by a Doctor of Audiology (Au.D) to maximize your benefit in noise. The most beneficial feature is directional/dual microphones. This feature helps to reduce, not eliminate, background noise. Directional microphones will improve the clarity of sounds. Some hearing aids also utilize noise reduction technology. This feature enhances speech while suppressing noise. Hearing aid adjustments are made frequently by your audiologist during your initial visits to maximize your benefit. Your ultimate success will be based on the hearing aid technology, the adjustments, your expectations, and the use of communication strategies.