

then take one aid out for one or two days to see how you hear and understand. When you do this, you will experience for yourself the advantages of binaural versus monaural hearing.

Adjustment Period

The State of Maryland requires that patients considering hearing aids receive an audiologic evaluation (within six months) and a thirty-day adjustment period after being fit with the devices. Audiology Associates, Inc., provides patients a seventy-five day adjustment period. Our office provides this additional time since it has been our experience that patients need to be exposed to a variety of listening situations in order to best evaluate your benefit. Patients return four to five times for hearing aid check visits during the adjustment period. These multiple appointments allow the audiologist to adjust (program) the devices based upon your listening experience. This protocol ensures your proper adjustment and use of the hearing aids.

Our mutual goal is to maximize your communication performance. It is important to remember that the more you wear your hearing aids, the quicker you will receive communication benefit. Make sure to tell your audiologist if something isn't quite right; many changes can be made to your hearing aids during this adjustment period. Time spent with these adjustments will result in greater overall hearing aid satisfaction. Your audiologist is your long-term partner in this process. Together you will achieve years of improved hearing and enhanced quality of life.

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

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Audiology Associates

Hearing Aids *What you need to know*



WWW.AIAAUDIOLOGY.COM

You Are a Candidate for Hearing Aids. Now What?

Your Doctor of Audiology (Au.D.) has completed a thorough evaluation of your auditory system and it was determined you are a candidate for amplification. It is up to you, as the patient, to make some important decisions in order to be a successful hearing aid user. There are three main decisions each patient needs to make when choosing their hearing aids: the style of hearing aid, circuitry, and monaural (one ear) or binaural (two ears) fitting. These decisions are made in collaboration with your audiologist to determine what is best for your ears, your hearing loss, and your specific listening needs.

Style of Hearing Aids

There are six main styles of hearing aids. Not all styles of hearing aids are appropriate for all hearing losses. Larger hearing aids offer more power and fitting options. Smaller hearing aids limit power but allow for a more cosmetic appeal. Once you know what styles are appropriate for your hearing loss, you can decide which style you are comfortable wearing. It is important to understand that your hearing aid investment is primarily the circuit type as opposed to the style or size of the device. In today's digital world, your investment in improved hearing will provide up to eight to ten years of better hearing.

Circuitry

Two salient features highlight your hearing aid investment: noise reduction/directional microphones, that provide better hearing in background noise, and the number of channels, that effects speech clarity. The circuit's ability to amplify speech and turn down background noise is an important feature for someone who is consistently in environments with a lot of background noise (e.g., restaurants, parties, social gatherings). The better the hearing aid controls background noise, the more sophisticated the circuit. Reducing background noise can be accomplished with the use of directional/dual microphones and/or through noise reduction circuitry. Both kinds of technology, noise reduction and directional microphones, are used to help in noisy environments.

- *Noise Reduction and Directional Microphones*

- Directional microphones, sometimes called dual microphones, allow hearing aids to reduce background noise. Two microphones allow voices from the front to be increased to improve speech understanding while decreasing the volume of noise coming from the sides and back. In order to have directional microphones, the hearing aid has to be large enough to accommodate the size of two microphones.
- Noise reduction technology helps reduce noise, like a refrigerator running or the air conditioner blowing. The hearing aid will analyze sound and determine if the pitch and loudness resembles speech or background noise. If the hearing aid identifies background noise, the circuit will reduce the noise while enhancing speech clarity.

- *Channels and Speech Clarity*

- Channels in a hearing aid are similar to equalizers found on a stereo. Hearing aids with more channels allow your audiologist to vary specific pitch sounds and to fine tune the hearing aid program to your hearing loss.
- In general, the more channels a hearing aid has, the more sophisticated the circuit; thereby, providing better sound performance.

Should I Wear One Hearing Aid or Two?

This is a common question posed to Doctors of Audiology. Hearing with both ears is as nature intended. Binaural hearing allows you to hear sounds accurately and more naturally, especially in noisy situations. Hearing from both ears also gives you a sense of balance and the ability to localize sounds. Amplifying only one ear when both ears have a hearing loss can put you at a disadvantage with overall sound quality, speech clarity, your ability to understand speech in noisy situations, and your comfort level while listening.

Using one hearing aid can result in straining to hear and can cause fatigue. Studies have shown that even when a hearing loss is worse in one ear, people with hearing loss in both ears will benefit from wearing two aids. All of this information is good to know, but it is important, that you as a hearing aid user experience these advantages for yourself. During your trial period, it is recommended that you wear your hearing aids for a month in both ears and