



My Audiologist Says I Need Hearing Aids... Now What?

You have a hearing loss that affects your communication with those around you—but you are not alone. Your audiologist will guide you on the path to better communication. Many people find it helpful to bring a family member or friend to appointments with their audiologist.

You may have a lot of questions since the moment you were told that you need a hearing aid. A recommendation for a specific hearing aid will be made based on your needs and the results from your hearing test. Here are some helpful statements and questions to bring up when talking about hearing aids.

Talk to your audiologist about your day-to-day life and the activities that you enjoy. For example, do you

- Work outside the home or do you stay at home? Please clarify.
- Attend meetings, conferences, plays, movies, concerts, or worship services?
- Communicate mostly in one-on-one situations or mostly in groups (either large or small)?
- Participate in sports (either individual or group)?
- Enjoy watching TV, talking on the telephone, or traveling in the car?

Will hearing aids fix my hearing?

When you first start wearing your hearing aids, background noise may seem loud and distracting. Even your own voice may sound louder. Give it time. It may take you several weeks or months to get used to listening with your hearing aids. An ASHA-certified audiologist can instruct you on how to get the most benefit from your hearing aids. The guidance in this document will help you communicate more easily and adjust more quickly to your hearing aids.

Remember that hearing aids have a 30-day trial period, and you should return to your audiologist within that 30-day timeframe to make sure that your hearing aids are working properly. With good follow-up care, it should get easier to hear and understand speech. Over time, you should become more relaxed. You may notice that you do not have to ask for repetitions from the speaker.

Some people have difficulty understanding speech, no matter how loud it is. In such cases, hearing aids will provide awareness of sound but will not make it clearer. An audiologist can talk with you about other types of communication strategies and assistive listening devices that may be helpful.

Do I need one or two hearing aids?

If you have a hearing loss in both ears, your audiologist will most likely recommend two hearing aids. Research has shown that two hearing aids are more helpful than one in improving listening. For example, using two hearing aids can help you tell the direction of a given sound, such as an approaching car. Using two hearing aids can also improve your understanding of speech in noisy situations. Many people who wear hearing aids say that their listening experience feels more natural and that they are more relaxed while listening.

Are all hearing aids the same?

No. Hearing aids are different in style, size, degree of amplification, volume control, and special features. Hearing assistive technology devices are available for use alone or with many hearing aids. These devices provide extra help in specific listening situations, such as talking on the telephone, interacting in noisy backgrounds, or socializing in small- or large-group listening settings (e.g., restaurants, concert halls, or movie theaters). An audiologist can advise you about frequency modulation (FM) or infrared assistive technology that might help with your particular listening needs.

An ASHA-certified audiologist can advise you about hearing aid styles, features, and hearing assistive technology devices that best meet your communication needs and budget. Before you get fitted, ask your audiologist for a demonstration of hearing aids. And when you are fitted for your hearing aid, ask your audiologist to run a “verification test” to confirm that the hearing aids are working properly for you.

Where should I buy my hearing aids?

Personalized communication with an ASHA-certified audiologist who fits and adjusts the hearing aid is a very

important part of becoming a successful hearing aid user. This face-to-face communication is often not available if hearing aids are purchased online. Purchasing hearing aids online does not include the important diagnostic audiologic evaluation, hearing aid orientation and adjustment, and counseling and rehabilitation services that an ASHA-certified audiologist provides. These services help ensure quality care and full benefit from the use of a hearing aid, and they provide appropriate referral if medical treatment is needed.

Will my health insurance pay any of the costs of acquiring hearing aids?

Some private health care plans pay for audiologic tests, hearing aid evaluations, and even partial or full coverage of hearing aids. Check with your health insurance company to find out exactly what is covered. At this time, Medicare does not cover hearing aids. Depending on your medical plan, Medicaid may cover the cost of hearing aids for adults and must provide coverage for children. Federal and state regulations may require a medical evaluation and clearance from a licensed physician prior to hearing aid purchase.

Key points to remember

- Hearing loss does not have to limit you. Properly fitted hearing aids and the development of good communication strategies can help you in many listening situations.
- Hearing aids do not return your hearing back to normal, but they do offer help to most persons with hearing loss.
- While you are wearing your hearing aids, ask your audiologist to check them to make sure they are set up just right for you.

NOTES:



For more information and to view the entire Audiology Information Series library, scan with your mobile device.

- Pay attention to important information about your hearing aids such as trial period, sales contract, warranty information, and features. Keep this information in a safe place.
- Attend follow-up care orientation and rehabilitation with a certified audiologist within the 30-day trial period.
- Ask your audiologist about other hearing assistive technology devices that can be used with or without your hearing aid to improve your hearing in difficult or large-area listening situations.
- Talk to your audiologist about problems that you are having with communication or with your hearing aids—the devices may only need a simple adjustment. Hearing aids have a 30-day trial period, and you should return to your audiologist within that 30 days to make sure that your hearing aids are working correctly.
- Receive regular audiologic follow-up care, which will help you adjust to the hearing aids and monitor any changes in your hearing.

Look for an audiologist who has:

- A master's or doctoral degree
- The Certificate of Clinical Competence in Audiology (CCC-A) from ASHA
- A state license in one of the 50 states or in the District of Columbia

For more information, or to find an ASHA-certified audiologist who can make a difference in your life, contact ASHA at the address, e-mail, or telephone number below.

For more information about hearing loss, hearing aids, or referral to an ASHA-certified audiologist, contact:



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