

FAQs

How do hearing aids work?

Hearing aids fill the gap created by a hearing loss by receiving and amplifying sound. While there are many different types of hearing aid technology, four basic components are common to them all:

1. a microphone, which receives sound and translates it into electrical impulses;
2. an amplifier, which makes those electrical impulses stronger;
3. a receiver (speaker), which translates those now stronger impulses into louder sounds; and
4. a battery, which serves as a power source for the whole system.

Hearing aids vary widely in their styles, sizes and levels of circuit technology.

When should I consider hearing aids?

As soon as you notice that you are not hearing as well as you used to. It is better to start wearing hearing aids sooner rather than later. Generally speaking, the longer you leave it, the longer it takes to get used to wearing hearing aids.

What about the complaints I have heard about hearing aids?

It is true there are several concerns that are sometimes mentioned by hearing aid users. Here are four of the most common.

"People have told me that hearing aids are fine for one-to-one conversation, but not helpful in background noise"

One-to-one conversation is the easiest listening situation for those with good as well as poor hearing. In background noise those with hearing loss face particular difficulties. Modern hearing aids have taken great steps in minimising the intrusive effects of background noise. The degree and type of hearing loss from which you suffer will influence how well you hear with your hearing aid, but the initial hearing assessment will identify any potential problems. The latest fully digital and digitally programmable hearing aids offer many advantages over conventional behind-the-ear and in-the-ear aids, particularly in difficult listening situations.

"My own voice sounds strange."

Hearing aid amplify some or all sounds. This includes the sound of your own voice. With time and use, this should become less noticeable, but if this bothers

you, see your hearing aid professional who will address this problem.

"I have a problem with whistling sounds or feedback."

There are several common causes of this problem, all of which are easily solved. First, your hearing aid may fit too loosely. This allows the amplified sound to escape the ear and be picked up again by the microphone, thus resulting in feedback. Secondly, some feedback happens when you are standing too close to a surface that reflects sound, such as a wall. Thirdly, wax ingression from the ear canal into the hearing aid or a wax blockage in the ear can prevent the sound from travelling into the ear. Finally, many feedback problems are simply the result of a hearing aid's volume control being turned up too high. Most feedback problems can be easily remedied by the user. However, if you continue to have a consistent problem with feedback, take your hearing aids in for a check- up.

"I feel pressure in my ear."

This feeling of occlusion is often noticed when first wearing a hearing aid and is usually due to the ear becoming accustomed to being blocked. Sometimes, excess air can become trapped between your eardrum and the hearing aid. If this feeling persists, your hearing professional can alter your hearing aid to alleviate the problem.

What happens in the future if my hearing aid needs servicing?

The hearing aid has a comprehensive one or two year manufacturers warranty and is covered by a 30-day 'no-quibble' money back guarantee of satisfaction. We operate a system of regular reviews, this includes a checkup of your hearing and your hearing aid.

How do I know if a hearing aid will help me?

The vast majority of people with hearing loss will benefit from wearing hearing aids. After the hearing assessment it is usually possible to give some indication of the likely level of benefit.

How long will it take to get used to wearing my hearing aids?

It takes time to get used to wearing hearing aids, especially if you have lived with hearing loss for a long time. With normal hearing the brain is able to 'focus' on the sounds that we want to listen to, whilst 'filtering out' distracting background noise. As hearing deteriorates the brain loses this ability to 'focus'. When you first wear a hearing aid the brain is suddenly bombarded with lots of sound that it has not heard for some time. It takes a little while for the brain to 're -learn' how to 'focus' and 'filter' these noises again. Background noise can be

distracting at first, but it will get better as the brain regains its ability to focus. This process of adjustment can take some people a few weeks while for others it may take longer, the important thing is to persevere while gradually increasing the amount of time you spend wearing the hearing aids.

Will my hearing aids amplify sounds and damage my hearing further?

Your hearing aid will be preset to a safe level of maximum amplification. However, keep in mind that you may have to reaccustom yourself to loud startling sounds as they are amplified by your hearing aid.

Do I need one or two hearing aids?

Experts agree that if you have a hearing loss in both ears you will get most benefit if you wear two hearing aids. Wearing two aids will help you to identify the direction that sounds are coming from and will reduce the time it takes to get used to wearing hearing aids.

What sort of changes or adaptations are necessary with a hearing aid?

First, you need to understand that it is not possible for a hearing aid to completely restore your hearing. What it can do is enhance sound and thus allow you to hear better. Since hearing loss is gradual, over the years you may have become unaccustomed to normal environmental sounds such as traffic noise, the hum of a refrigerator or air conditioner, nature sounds, or background conversation. Therefore, when you begin to wear hearing aids, it is necessary to re-educate your brain to practice selective listening and learn once again to choose only those sounds which you wish to hear and ignore the rest. It is important that you wear your hearing aids as much as possible. This is the best way for you to get used to them and the way that they will work. This also helps you become more skilled at recognising sound direction, learning what hearing aid settings work best in different situations, and using visual clues in different hearing environments.

Patience is the key. Your friends and family can be very helpful in the whole process. Encourage them to speak to you in a normal voice without over-enunciating or over-emphasizing their lip movements. If, for some reason, you continue to find the adjustment to be difficult, your hearing aid dispenser will be happy to answer any questions which you may have and help you solve any of your hearing related problems.

For any further help or advice please contact our freephone helpline

0800 028 6179