

Hearing Aid FAQs

Do I need two hearing aids?

If your hearing loss is similar in both ears, two hearing aids usually provide far more benefit than one, especially in situations with background noise. Typically, two hearing aids provides far better sound quality than one hearing aid.

Keep in mind that if you would benefit from two but only wear a hearing aid in one ear, lack of stimulation of the other ear may decrease ability to understand speech over time.

Is smaller better?

It's instinctive to assume that smaller hearing aids are more advanced, but that's not always (?) true. Small hearing aids may be more "invisible," but they're not for every hearing loss. You can discuss this with your audiologist. Furthermore, tiny hearing aids are harder to handle. If you can pick up a dime off a table, you probably won't have much difficulty manipulating a standard hearing aid. Some hearing aids have larger volume controls; others have options for remote controls that can turn the aid on and off, adjust the volume, and switch programs. Changing hearing aid batteries can be a challenge for the less dexterous. Some devices use rechargeable batteries, doing away with the need to change small batteries. Extended-wear hearing aids (e.g., Lyric) eliminate the need to change hearing aid batteries.

Will devices cure my hearing loss? Will they make it worse?

Hearing aids are just what the name implies: they are an aid to your hearing, not a cure. That is, they are sophisticated devices to help you to compensate for hearing loss and function well as a listener. Properly fitted hearing aids will not make your hearing worse, either. A trained audiologist will not fit you with a hearing aid that is too loud and poses potential hearing damage. All aids have a cut off level to protect the listener from excessively loud sounds. Some people report that their hearing loss feels worse when they remove their hearing aids, compared to the hearing ability before the aids. That's a common experience for a user who benefited from new amplification and now realizes how much they were missing before and it is a sign your brain has adjusted to hearing well with your hearing aids (Some hearing losses are progressive, so if you really feel your ability to hear has decreased, see your audiologist for a checkup.)

Do I have options besides hearing aids?

Yes. There are therapeutic options and technology other than hearing aids that can help manage hearing loss. However, the strategies are usually most beneficial when used with hearing aids. Speechreading (i.e., lipreading) and auditory training are therapeutic options that can greatly improve ease of communication. Many people experience tremendous benefit from assistive listening devices for specific listening situations, such as listening to television, phone calls, high background noise, classrooms, or large room listening situations (religious services, performances, etc.). Assistive devices, either alone or in combination with hearing aids can make a world of difference.