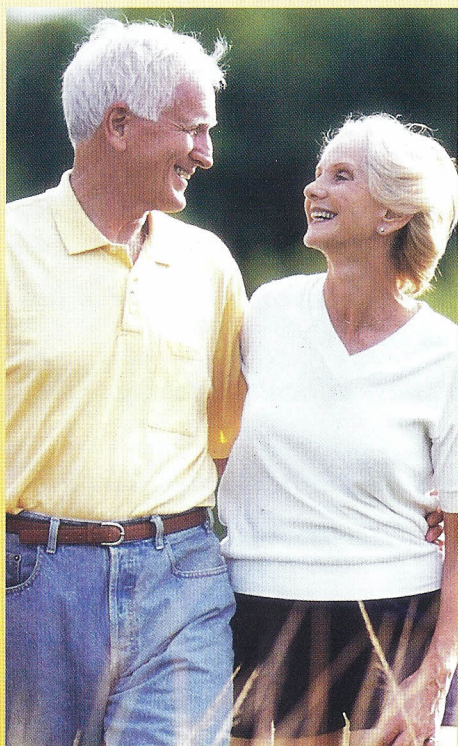


HEARING ? LOSS ?

*You may not
know **what**
you're missing*



AMERICAN
ACADEMY OF
AUDIOLOGY



What You Should Know About Hearing Loss

Hearing loss usually develops slowly, often worsens with age, and is generally permanent.

Most hearing difficulties can be helped with individually selected, prescribed and fitted hearing aids or other assistive listening devices.

Indications That You May Have a Hearing Loss

If you agree with one or more of the following statements, it may indicate the need to ask your doctor for a complete hearing screening.

Do you have difficulty following conversations in a noisy restaurant or crowded room?

Do you feel that people mumble or fail to speak clearly?

Do you have difficulty listening to the TV or radio?

Do you find it difficult understanding the speaker at a public meeting or religious service?

Do you hear better with one ear than the other?

Does your hearing difficulty interfere with your personal, family or social life?

Do you avoid going to social gatherings because of difficulty hearing?

Do you experience ringing or noises in your ears?

DON'T LET POOR HEARING CAUSE YOU TO MISS OUT ON THE MANY GOOD AND VITAL MESSAGES OF LIFE.

Why You May Be Unaware of the Problem

It is typical for an individual with a mild to moderate degree of hearing loss to be unaware of the problem, even though family and friends are quite aware of it.

Hearing loss is invisible and almost always painless. There are no warning signs, except in some cases there may be ringing or hissing noises in the ear(s). But the real reason hearing loss “sneaks” up on you is that the change is so gradual. Most hearing losses develop over a period of 25-30 years. By age 50 or 60, your hearing may have deteriorated enough that it is becoming difficult to effectively converse with those around you, particularly when there are other noises in the area.

Most audiologists believe that hearing loss in older adults is the accumulation of two or more causes, such as exposure to loud noises, genetics, or the natural aging process.

Hearing loss can interfere with your quality of life. A large study conducted by the National Council on Aging showed that hearing loss can:

- Restrict your ability to interact with others
- Prevent you from receiving important information
- Cause misunderstandings
- Heighten stress
- Produce unnecessary fatigue, and
- Filter out the subtle sounds of nature.

In addition, hearing loss can:

- Cause social isolation
- Aggravate emotional disorders
- Strain interpersonal relationships
- Mimic inattentiveness or poor memory
- Reduce your earning power (because of impaired ability to understand speech)
- Lead to diminished physical health, and
- Negatively impact self-esteem.

What You Should Know About Hearing Aids

Your doctor may recommend a complete hearing evaluation by an audiologist. If the audiologist recommends hearing aids for you, he or she will take into consideration your lifestyle and personal goals and guide you to the most suitable hearing aid(s) or assistive listening devices.

Benefits from Hearing Aids

Hearing aid users report higher levels of involvement in social activities, fewer worries, more positive social and family experiences, and greater physical well-being than those who have uncorrected hearing loss. Correcting your hearing also may reduce frustration, fatigue and stress, while enhancing emotional stability and improving self-esteem.

Who Can Be Helped?

Most patients, including those with “nerve deafness” and high frequency hearing loss, can benefit from the use of hearing aids. One is never too old or too young to start using hearing aids. More than 95% of patients with hearing loss are considered candidates for hearing aids.

Hearing Aid Styles

Hearing aids come in a wide range of sizes and styles, including completely-in-the-canal (CIC), in-the-canal (ITC), in-the-ear (ITE), behind-the-ear (BTE), and open ear fittings with mini/micro BTE aids. The type of hearing aid recommended depends upon your individual needs.



Completely-In-the-Canal (CIC)



In-The-Canal (ITC)



Behind-The-Ear (BTE)



In-The-Ear (ITE)



Mini Behind-The-Ear (Mini BTE)

Photos courtesy of Siemens Hearing Instruments

Hearing Aid Technology

Today's technology provides significant enhancements over older conventional hearing aids. With the advent of modern computer software, there is now a large selection of hearing aids with digital processing. Research has demonstrated that more and more people with hearing loss are experiencing greater comfort and ability to understand speech in noisy situations because of advances in signal processing and the use of hearing aids with directional or multiple microphones.

Two Hearing Aids or One?

You and your audiologist should determine the need for one hearing aid or two. For most people with hearing loss in both ears, binaural amplification offers substantial improvement in both quiet and noisy environments, along with a better sense of direction for locating the sound source.

Realistic Expectations

Just as eyeglasses do not "cure" vision deficiencies, hearing aids do not restore hearing to normal, and they do not solve all hearing problems. Some people adjust to wearing hearing aids and experience great benefit, while others do not. The only way to tell if hearing aids might provide an important difference in your life, and the lives of your family members, is to consult an audiologist to discuss your particular situation.

Aural Rehabilitation

Audiologists provide additional services and procedures for lessening or compensating for hearing impairment. Various approaches involve auditory training, speech reading, and helping to improve listening skills.

Good communication
is important in life,
and it starts
with good hearing.

Talk to your doctor today
and ask him or her to
screen your hearing.

Northwest Hearing Services
77 Fairfield Street
Saint Albans, VT 05478
(802)524-0839

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11730 Plaza America Drive, Suite 300
Reston, VA 20190-4798
1-800-AAA-2336

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