

Get More From Your Amplification



GOOD START: Getting the hearing aids that work best for you begins with collaboration with your audiologist.

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espite the strategies audiologists use to match hearing aids to patients' needs, people still make returns for alterations. A key to a successful hearing aid fitting is working collaboratively with your audiologist. The following 10 recommendations will assist you during the fitting process.¹⁻³

1 Identify an audiologist to help you with the fitting. Additionally, begin to explore payment methods for services and the hearing aid.

2 Explore available information about amplification. Talk with friends, consult with your physician, and read printed materials and Internet articles on hearing aids to learn about terms and technology. Take a list of questions to your audiologist's office.

3 Be prepared to make decisions. For example, if you qualify for more than one hearing aid style, you will need to select a style. The most common styles include CIC (completely-in-the-canal), ITC (in-the-canal), ITE (in-the-ear) and BTE (behind-the-ear). Choice is based on function (as each style has operational strengths and weaknesses), comfort and cosmetic appearance.

4 Be prepared to discuss costs. Hearing aids range in price from several hundred to several thousand dollars. Hearing aid style, technology used and local marketing conditions influence hearing aid costs. Some offices offer other financing.

5 Be prepared to operate the hearing aid and adjust to the new sounds it delivers. Audiologists will recommend listening strategies to make the necessary adjustments (i.e. transitioning from using the device a few hours a day to wearing the device during most waking hours). You also will learn that not all listening environments and conditions are equally friendly to your new hearing aid. For

example, water and dust exposure are hazardous, and noisy environments, where listening conditions are poor, may not be improved with a hearing aid.

6 Be a motivated hearing aid user. You must be interested in learning to use technology and willing to experience various degrees of success with amplification in different listening environments. Without motivation and tenacity, hearing aid users will not maximize the benefits.

7 Be prepared to purchase supplies to keep your hearing aid operational (i.e. batteries, cleaning kits, drying kits), and go for your scheduled cleanings and adjustments.

8 Plan to replace your hearing aid every three to five years. Hearing aid life depends on the care and maintenance of the device, as well as your needs and the hearing aid's ability to accommodate changes in hearing. Hearing aids do eventually show signs of wear, and repairs are not always cost-effective.

9 Be prepared to discuss other assistive listening devices (ALDs). ALDs are technologies that help you hear more effectively and can be connected to your television, hearing aid, computer or telephone.

10 Insure your new hearing aid and ALDs with protection like a homeowner's insurance policy or special insurance policy. Amplification is expensive and, unfortunately, can be damaged easily (i.e. eaten by the family pet, flushed down a toilet, trampled on, lost or stolen).

REFERENCES

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