

Consumer Guide to Hearing Aids

Information you need to make a sound
buying decision



DID YOU KNOW?

Approximately **28 million** Americans have some degree of hearing loss, ranging from mild to severe.

10 million Americans have suffered irreversible noise induced hearing loss, and **30 million** more are exposed to dangerous noise levels each day.

Approximately **314 in 1,000** people over age 65 have hearing loss and **40 to 50 percent** of people 75 and older have hearing loss.

Only **1 out of 5** people who could benefit from a hearing aid actually wears one.



IS IT TIME TO ACT?

Maybe you already know you could benefit from a hearing aid, but you've been putting it off. Many people do, for reasons like these:

- I don't know how they would look in my ears
- I'm not sure I can afford a good quality hearing aid
- There are so many different kinds of hearing aids, how will I know I picked the right one for me?

Don't wait. Make an appointment with a certified hearing care professional. That person will give you a hearing test and consult with you about your hearing issues. Together, you'll discuss the different styles and electronic capabilities of today's hearing aids and decide on the best instrument for you.

DOES THIS SOUND FAMILIAR?

People are always mumbling

I'm constantly asking people to repeat what they said

I'm often told I have the TV volume up too loud

I misunderstand what people are telling me

IF SO, IT'S TIME FOR A HEARING TEST.

HEARING AID STYLES

You'll find there are a variety of hearing aid styles from which to choose. Technological advances have resulted in more options to meet specific hearing problems as well as cosmetic concerns. The choice of electronics in the hearing aid is primarily what makes the difference in performance and price, but style also plays a role.

There are five hearing aid styles.



BEHIND THE EAR (BTE)

easiest to adjust

appropriate for most types of hearing loss and ages

secure fit with minimal sound passageway obstruction



IN THE EAR (ITE)

easy to adjust

appropriate for mild to severe hearing loss

custom-made shell



IN THE CANAL (ITC)

less visible

appropriate for mild to mildly severe hearing loss

variety of circuit choices that previously required a larger aid



ON THE EAR (OTE)

comfortable "open" earbud conforms for an instant, secure fit

appropriate for mild to moderate high frequency hearing loss

dark-colored case, micro-thin tube and tiny earbud for ultimate discretion



COMPLETELY IN THE CANAL (CIC)

not visible

appropriate for mild to moderate hearing loss

not appropriate for all ages



HEARING AID TECHNOLOGY

The most important part of any hearing aid is the electronics. Put simply, the more sophisticated the technology, the more precise and realistic the listening experience. All hearing aids amplify sounds via microphones, but the quality of those sounds can differ dramatically.

CONVENTIONAL OR ANALOG TECHNOLOGY

This is the oldest, simplest, and least expensive hearing aid technology available. Fewer than 20 percent of hearing aids sold today are analog and they are rarely sold in the U.S. Analog electronics amplify all sounds equally. Distinguishing between many sounds can be difficult and loud or soft sounds may require you to manually adjust the volume of your hearing aid.

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- basic level of hearing aid technology
-
- fair sound quality
-
- good listening comfort in quiet environments
-
- poor listening comfort in noisy environments
-

PROGRAMMABLE ANALOG

Programmable technology allows you to adjust the aid to amplify sounds for different situations. This hearing aid can be programmed so that loud sounds are amplified less and soft sounds are amplified more. These are rarely sold in the U.S. Although this is an advancement over analog technology, you may still need to manually adjust your hearing aid, or switch settings, under certain circumstances.

-
- programmable level of hearing aid technology
-
- good sound quality
-
- improved tuning quality
-
- multiple memories for various listening situations
-
- directional microphone availability
-
- improved fitting flexibility
-



DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY

Eighty percent of the hearing aids sold today incorporate digital technology. Because of its popularity, the price of the digital hearing aid has fallen substantially in recent years. Digital technology involves a computer chip that converts incoming sound into digital code and adjusts the sound specifically for your hearing loss. The ability to fine-tune this technology means a more realistic, natural listening experience. There are also options available to further improve sound differentiation.

- excellent sound quality
- somewhat automatic
- fully digital sound processing between microphone and receiver
- allows for fitting flexibility
- available directional microphone—improves listening comfort in quiet and noisy environments
- extensive fine-tuning capability
- excellent preservation of speech cues



NANOTECHNOLOGY — BEYOND DIGITAL

The latest evolution in hearing aid technology incorporates nanotechnology — science at the molecular level — to increase features and enhance the hearing experience. Only Starkey offers the Destiny™ line of hearing aids with nFusion™ Technology. This state-of-the-art instrument virtually eliminates several of the most common complaints among hearing aid users—feedback, artifacts, and white noise.

- unparalleled sound quality
- learns particular listening needs and habits as it is worn
- transitions easily from one acoustic environment to the next
- hearing professionals can demonstrate features within software
- improved speech intelligibility
- features activate automatically, eliminating the need for manual adjustment
- Active Feedback Intercept* virtually eliminates feedback

THERE'S A NEW WORLD WAITING FOR YOU

You may remember someone from your past who had to fuss constantly with his or her hearing aid to get the volume right. Thankfully, those days are past. Today's hearing instruments are highly sophisticated and many automatically adjust to your specific hearing loss and to changing environments. The only question that remains is, "What are you waiting for?" The process is as easy as 1, 2, 3.

1

Visit starkey.com to locate a hearing professional in your area.

2

Make an appointment for a hearing evaluation.

3

Consult with your hearing professional about hearing aid technologies. Learn more about the benefits of the Destiny™ line of hearing aids from Starkey.

Hearing clearly again will have a positive impact on your life, opening doors to new experiences and relationships. Don't put it off any longer.

Make the decision to improve your hearing today
and start living life to the fullest.

Privately held Starkey Laboratories, Inc. is a hearing technology company headquartered in Eden Prairie, Minnesota, USA. The company is recognized for its innovative design, development, and distribution of comprehensive digital listening systems. Founded in 1967, Starkey currently has more than 4,000 employees and facilities in 18 countries. For more information, visit www.Starkey.com.

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