

### Hearing Loss Self-Check Test

- Do you find it difficult to follow a conversation in a crowded room or restaurant?
- Do you frequently ask people, especially women or children, to speak up or repeat themselves?
- Do you find yourself turning one ear toward a speaker to hear better?
- Do you find it difficult to hear when speaking on the phone?
- Do you turn the volume of the TV up louder than others need?
- Do you find that it is necessary to sit up front in church or an auditorium to hear?

### Causes of Hearing Loss

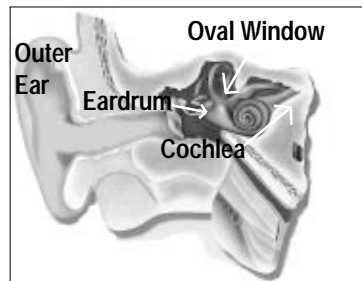
Hearing loss is a health care problem. It can happen at any age, not necessarily "old age". Some causes of hearing impairment are:

- Middle Ear Infection
- Heredity
- Illness or Birth Defect
- Traumatic Injury
- Tumors
- Ototoxic Medications
- Natural Aging Process
- Exposure to Loud Noise
- Exposure to Constant Noise

### How You Hear

The brain processes sound from both ears to form a single "sound picture". Sound waves are collected by the outer ear and directed along the ear canal to the ear drum. When the sound waves hit the eardrum, the impact creates vibrations which cause the three bones of the middle ear to move. The vibration of the bones in the middle ear transmits the energy to the inner ear or cochlea. Bending of hairs inside the cochlea cause nerve impulses to be transmitted to the hearing center of the brain. Most of the time hearing loss stems from damage to inner ear hair cells, nerve fibers or both.

Balanced sound requires both ears to be functioning evenly. Balanced hearing is vital in helping you locate the direction from which a sound is coming. Two ears, working together, allow us to isolate one specific sound such as a soft voice or moving car so the brain can concentrate on it. It helps you respond more accurately and confidently. Less amplification may be needed by using two aids to achieve a comfortable listening level.



### What Can You Expect From Hearing Aids?

Hearing aids do three basic things: pick up sounds, amplify sounds, and deliver them to your ear. Hearing aids can not restore normal hearing. They can not slow down progression of nerve deafness, however, in most cases of nerve deafness hearing aids can help by amplifying sound. You may need to have hearing aids supplemented with auditory training.

The overall benefit of hearing aids depends on proper fit, frequency of use, severity of hearing loss and the accuracy of the hearing evaluation. Hearing aids do not selectively amplify the voice of the primary speaker. Some background noise and other voices will be amplified as well. There may be lots of sounds that can be annoying to you at first, however, you can learn to ignore them or adjust to their loudness. The amount of understanding in a noisy environment varies depending on each individual's hearing loss.

The hearing examination will determine your response to various tones, sounds, words, and volumes to determine what you can not hear. The profile of your hearing loss is called an audiogram. Your hearing instruments are custom built to the specifications dictated by the results of your audiogram. The cases are custom made to fit your ears using high grade, non-allergenic acrylic. The circuitry is selected and hand-crafted to meet the requirements of your impairment. A fine-tuning control allows further refinement of the fitting by the Hearing Instrument Specialist.

## Styles and Types of Hearing Aids

Hearing aids are available in a variety of styles and types. The type best suited for your needs depends upon several factors including: degree of hearing loss, size of your ear canal, and manual dexterity. Your Hearing Specialist will help you determine which hearing aids would best suit your specific needs.

Four basic styles of hearing aids are In-The-Ear (ITE), In-The-Canal (ITC), Completely-In-The-Canal (CIC), and Behind-The-Ear (BTE). Each aid is custom designed to fit the wearer's ear.

ITE hearing aids are more visible than the smaller canal aids or CIC's. The basic full shell is an In-The-Ear hearing aid which covers the entire bowl of the ear, coming out flush with the edge of the ear. They can be used for most types of hearing loss. If you have a severe to profound hearing loss, usually the full shell is used to be able to produce the power required.

The half shell is also an ITE and fits basically like the full shell but the helix or top part of the hearing aid is removed, making it a bit more comfortable, a little less conspicuous, and a little easier to remove. The half shell hearing aid is used for mild to serious hearing loss.

The canal (ITC) hearing aids fit into the opening of the ear canal making it less visible. The ITC aids are used for mild to moderate hearing loss.

If you have good manual dexterity and your ear canal is large, the CIC is an excellent choice for many people. The CIC is designed to hide entirely within the ear canal and is virtually unnoticeable. They are the smallest and least visible hearing aids. Its small size allows a more secure fit, reduced wind noise, reduction of feedback and better directionality. The CIC does not allow easy volume control, and can be awkward for those with a loss of manual dexterity.

The BTE aid fits behind the ear and is attached to a custom ear mold. This type of aid is useful for more severe hearing loss and allows a more powerful battery to be used.



Full Shell



Half Shell



Canal



Completely-In-The-Canal



Behind The Ear

Hearing  
Loss . . .  
What Lies Ahead?

## To Contact Us

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