



Speech and Hearing BC

# Hearing Aids: Question and Answers

## Do I need hearing aids?

Do you have difficulty understanding speech or have trouble following conversations? If you have no hearing problems that should be medically treated, you may benefit from wearing hearing aids. For example, hearing aids may help you if you experience the following:

- Difficulty understanding speech in group situations
- Voices and sounds seem unclear or muffled
- Difficulty hearing on the telephone
- Difficulty hearing the TV or radio, and needing a louder volume than other people
- Others tell you that you do not always hear them correctly

## I already have hearing aids, when will I need new ones?

Hearing instruments generally last approximately 5 years. You may require a new hearing aid if yours:

- Is perhaps five years or older and no longer performs well
- Has been repaired many times, weakening the circuitry and shell
- Is no longer providing you with the benefit you feel it should
- Produces feedback uncontrollably
- No longer fits snugly into your ear

## Is it necessary to wear two hearing aids?

Often one hearing aid provides marked improvement in hearing. However, if you have hearing loss in both ears, it is often better to use two hearing aids. Two hearing aids help balance the hearing between ears, increase hearing from all directions, and increase hearing ability in noisy environments.

## Will I become dependent on my hearing aids?

If your hearing aids are appropriate for you, you should enjoy wearing them and feel that you are not hearing very well without them. This **WILL NOT** make you dependent on your hearing aids or make your ears "lazy".

## What if I only have trouble hearing some of the time?

Some people choose to wear hearing aids when they feel they need to or want to wear them. Some people choose to wear their hearing aids all the time, to be sure they are not missing anything. It is up to you to decide when and where to wear your hearing aids.

## Do hearing aids eliminate background noise?

There are many types of hearing aids available today that help reduce the amplification of background noise. It is important to recognize that these noise suppression aids are not perfect. There are also accessories that can be used with your hearing aids to help you hear better in noisier situations. Talk with your hearing health professional to discuss what solutions may work for you.

## What is the difference between an Audiologist and a Hearing Instrument Practitioner?

Both are qualified professionals with slightly different scopes of practice. Any professional that dispenses hearing aids in BC must be a regulated hearing instrument practitioner. Audiologists have additional training which enables them to provide an extended scope of practice. For example, they may offer diagnostic testing and management for auditory processing disorders, hyperacusis, tinnitus, and balance disorders. Audiologists are also trained in counselling and (re)habilitation. Both audiologists and hearing instrument practitioners can conduct hearing aid tests with adults for the purposes of dispensing hearing aids.

## Things you should watch for:

- Watch out for advertising claims. If an ad sounds too good to be true, it probably is!
- Do not buy a hearing aid online or through mail order. This presents difficulty with warranty, follow up, and ensuring company reputation. Also, the hearing aid may not be appropriate for your hearing loss, and it could cause harm if it is not fit correctly.
- When purchasing hearing aids, look for a warranty and trial period.
- Ask for a dated and signed contract/sales agreement identifying refundable and non-refundable items/amounts.

[www.speechandhearingbc.ca](http://www.speechandhearingbc.ca)