

# HEARING AIDS

## Frequently Asked Questions



### **Will a hearing aid restore my hearing?**

No hearing aid can restore your hearing to “normal”. Hearing aids are designed to let you hear soft sounds that you could not hear before while preventing loud sounds from becoming uncomfortably loud. They are designed to improve your ability to understand speech even in noisy environments although such environments can still be challenging.

### **How will hearing aids help me?**

Hearing aids can make a dramatic improvement in what you're able to hear and understand. They help you hear better by taking in sound through a microphone, boosting and modifying it to match the pattern of your hearing loss and then sending it to your ear canal. This will allow you to hear sounds at those frequencies your unaided ear cannot hear. In addition to simple amplification, hearing healthcare providers will adjust many settings to improve your ability to understand speech – sometimes even in noisy environments. Using multiple settings you can select which one works best in various surroundings. Millions would not wear them if they didn't feel they were benefiting from them.

### **How do I know which hearing aid will be best for me?**

There are many factors that will determine which hearing aid will be best suited for you. They include the nature and severity of your hearing loss, your lifestyle and the activities you regularly enjoy, your job, your eyesight and dexterity, how comfortable you are with technology, the size and shape of your outer ear and inner ear canal and cost. Work with your hearing healthcare professional to choose the right ones for you.

### **What hearing aid brand is the best?**

There are over half a dozen major hearing aid brands sold in the U.S. and all are held to the same rigorous quality standards set by the federal government. Some features are only found on certain brands, but your hearing healthcare professional will help you decide which hearing aids would be best for you.

### **Will I need a hearing aid for both ears?**

If you only have hearing loss in one ear – one hearing aid will suffice. Most often, hearing loss affects both ears so you will benefit more with two hearing aids. Today, about two-thirds of new users opt for dual hearing aids, and as a group they report a higher level of satisfaction than purchasers of a single hearing aid.

### **What is a telecoil?**

A telecoil is a small copper coil inside many hearing aids that, when activated, allows the hearing aid to connect wirelessly directly to the microphone of a public address system that features an audio frequency induction loop system (hearing loop) or, with a neckloop, to an infrared or FM assistive listening system.

### **What is a neckloop?**

Neckloops are a personal use version of a hearing loop that plugs into any electronic sound producing device and, in effect, turns hearing aids into headphones.

### **What is Bluetooth®?**

Bluetooth is a technology offered with some hearing aids that can connect wirelessly to a variety of sound sources such as a TV, a computer, a cellular phone or other electronic sound sources but only one user to one sound source. For example it will not connect users to a public address system. Often a separate device is needed for Bluetooth connectivity, usually at additional cost.

### **Should I go to an audiologist or a hearing aid dispenser?**

Audiologists and Hearing Aid Dispensers are licensed to fit and sell hearing aids in New Mexico. Both are trained in testing hearing and in fitting and adjusting today's hearing aids. Audiologists have a doctor's degree in audiology and are also trained to interpret test results from a medical perspective and to use additional testing to determine the need for medical treatment. Dispensers are trained to recognize problems that require referral to either a medical doctor or an audiologist but they are fully qualified to fit and adjust your hearing aids. You may also ask your primary care provider or people you know who have had experience buying hearing aids for their recommendations.

### **How long do hearing aids last?**

Hearing aids typically have repair, loss and damage warranties ranging from one year to four years with additional coverage often being offered. Hearing aids are usually stated to last from 3 to 5 years, but with proper care and maintenance hearing aids can last longer. Technology is constantly being upgraded, and as new features become available, new hearing aids may offer a big improvement in hearing, so replacement is not limited to when hearing aids "fail".

### **Does health insurance cover hearing aids?**

Some private health care plans cover the costs of audiologic tests, a hearing aid evaluation, and even partial or full coverage of a hearing aid, while others may cover only a hearing exam or no hearing care costs. New Mexico law requires some policies to cover them for children 18 or under.

### **Where can I find financial help to buy hearing aids?**

Here in New Mexico, for those who qualify, help is available from Medicaid, the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation and, for Veterans, from the Veterans Administration. Most health insurance programs offer coverage for minor children. Suggestions for other resources to explore can be found at <http://www.hearingloss.org/content/financial-assistance-programs-foundations>.

### **Where can you file a complaint?**

In the unlikely event that you are unhappy with your hearing aids or your hearing care provider and are unable to reconcile your differences, you can file a complaint on line with the New Mexico Attorney General's office at [www.NMAG.gov](http://www.NMAG.gov) or call toll free: 1-844-255-9210. Any complaint must be against the individual provider and not the company for which he/she works.