

Can You Hear Me Now??

The Reality of Hearing Loss

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Communication Strategies:

- If you want them to hear you, get their attention.
- Where your nose points, you will hear best.
- Don't talk with your mouth full when talking to someone with hearing loss.
- At a restaurant, sit with your back to the noise.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs):

Q: Why can't my spouse hear me when I'm in the other room? They have hearing aids!

A: Hearing aids don't cure hearing loss; they just make things louder so you can hear them better. Hearing aids help best when you are in a good communication situation- talking to someone in the same room face to face. Everyone has trouble hearing someone from the next room. Hearing aids don't change that.

Q: How do hearing aids really work?

A: Hearing aids amplify the sounds you hear. If you have a problem with the ear drum or ear bones, all we need to do is make things louder and the hearing improves. If there is inner ear damage and hearing loss, more sound input helps your nerves and sensory hearing mechanism work more efficiently to sense the sound better.

Q: Why are hearing aids so expensive?

A: The price differences between hearing aids are based on how customizable they are. The more expensive they are the more capable, in general. Fortunately, not everyone needs really expensive hearing aids. We try to provide what a person needs at

the best value. We also don't bundle services you may not need into the price. Some hearing aid vendors do and their prices are higher.

Q: Should I put my batteries in the freezer?

A: No. Hearing aid batteries do not work like alkaline batteries.

Q: Can I just wear them once in awhile?

A: No. Remember, you are re-training your brain to hear. If your goal was to run a marathon you wouldn't just train every so often. If you don't wear your aids, your brain will regress.

Q: Why do they sound good when they get adjusted and then a few weeks later they aren't as clear?

A: More than likely, your brain has gotten used to the signal from the hearing aids and you need an adjustment.

Q: Why does my family mumble? I can hear them, but they aren't clear.

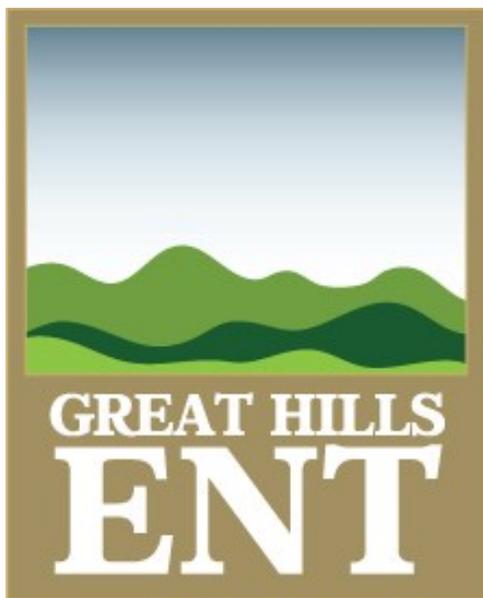
A: There is a difference between loudness and clarity. Some types of loss affect intelligibility more than others. We try to focus the hearing aids to boost precisely where the hearing loss is to help overcome that muddled hearing.

Take Home Points:

- Stick to the "Big Six" hearing aid manufacturers (Phonak, Siemens, Starkey, Oticon, GN Resound and Widex).
- Remember, you are re-training your brain to hear. You can not expect perfection over night.
- Not all styles of hearing aids are built for every type of hearing loss. Depending on the severity of your hearing loss and what is important for you to hear there will be some that are better than others.
- Remember to keep realistic expectations and to communicate with your Audiologist.
- Hearing aids can be hidden!! If your concern is people seeing it, believe it or not the small behind-the-ear hearing aids are the best.

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How Do We Hear?

Sound travels through the air in waves.

The outer ear is very important to hearing. It doesn't just hold up our glasses and make us not look like Mr. Potato Head. It funnels sound down the ear canal to the ear drum, magnifying the waves as they go. It also helps us hear where sounds are coming from.

When the sound hits the ear drum it enters the middle ear. The drum itself helps to gather sound. That vibration is amplified through the three smallest bones in the body (the hammer, anvil and stirrup) into the inner ear. When the ear drum is injured or the middle

ear is full of fluid that transmission of sound is dampened.

The inner ear looks like a snail shell. In fact it is a space full of fluid. That liquid picks up the sound wave and stimulates "hair" cells that in turn trigger nerve impulses. The auditory nerve takes those nerve impulses to the brain.

The brain is where we make sense of what we are hearing. We are able to determine what we are hearing and make sense of it here. If the sound signal is interrupted along any of this hearing path to the brain, we have trouble understanding.

