

# 10 Popular Questions About Hearing Aids

Many people have questions about hearing aids, whether they've used them for years or they're considering them for the first time. Here are a few of the most common questions we receive.

## **Are hearing aids covered by insurance/Medicaid/Medicare?**

Hearing aids are not always covered by insurance plans, but that doesn't mean your insurance won't cover part or all of the cost of a hearing aid. Some insurance plans have at least some provision for hearing instruments. This can include an allowance toward the purchase price of a hearing aid or a specified discount from the total cost.

## **Do hearing aids prevent hearing loss?**

Hearing aids do not stop hearing loss from occurring, but they can help minimize its effects and slow its progression. Most hearing loss occurs due to long periods of noise exposure, illness, or age. A hearing aid cannot reverse the effects of any of these causes. Rather, they mitigate their effects on your daily life.

## **Do hearing aids cause ear infections?**

Hearing aids do not cause ear infections on their own, but they can make ear infections more common in people with poor ear hygiene. The key to proper hearing aid use, especially with molded or in-ear hearing aids, is cleaning them properly. Hearing aids can introduce foreign bacteria into the ear if not kept clean and dry. However, if you take regular precautions, hearing aid use is not likely to cause an ear infection.

## **Are hearing aids waterproof?**

No, but most are water-resistant to some degree. That said, you shouldn't submerge any hearing aid in water for a long period. It's always best to take them out before activities such as bathing, showering, swimming, or other long-term water exposure.

## **How are hearing aids fitted?**

A hearing aid fitting varies considerably depending on the type and style of







hearing aid you choose. Some hearing aids require a mold to be taken of your ear, while others only require minor adjustment of an outside-the-ear device. However, your audiologist will always take care to make the hearing aid fitting comfortable and easy for you.

### **Should hearing aids whistle?**

Whistling is common in many hearing aids, but strictly speaking it should not happen. Whistling is a type of feedback, which is caused when the hearing aid picks up and amplifies its own background noise. This can happen when sound is redirected from the speaker to the microphone.

Some common causes of feedback include:

- A buildup of earwax that blocks sound from entering your ear effectively.
- Turning up the volume on your hearing aids too far.
- Standing too close to other people or surfaces that can reflect sound.

### **Should hearing aid batteries be refrigerated?**

In the past, hearing aid batteries were large and bulky, and often used electrochemical materials that lost their charge quickly. Today, however, hearing aid batteries use materials that hold their charge for long periods. Storing them in the refrigerator does not help their performance in any way, and in some cases can actually harm them. Batteries stored in the fridge may gather moisture and wear out prematurely. It's best to keep them in a dry, room temperature location like a drawer or medicine cabinet.

### **Should you wear hearing aids all the time?**

Some people only wear their hearing aids when they expect to be in a situation where hearing is difficult. Unfortunately this can make their hearing worse than if they wore them all the time. Taking your hearing aids out frequently doesn't grant this noise filtering benefit. Infrequent hearing aid use can make it harder for you to get the full benefit of your hearing aids, since your brain won't be as used to filtering out background noise if you don't wear them consistently.

### **Do hearing aids always work for hearing loss?**

A hearing aid is not a perfect hearing loss solution. Hearing aids can help many people with hearing loss, but they cannot help everyone. Total hearing loss, nerve damage to the inner ear or brain, and physical damage to the inner ear can make hearing aids ineffective. In these cases you'll need to speak to an audiologist to determine what other options you have for treating your hearing loss.

### **When should I buy hearing aids?**

There is no single requirement for buying hearing aids beyond wanting to hear better. If you think you could benefit from a hearing aid, your first step is to make an appointment with a local audiologist to have your hearing tested. Call **405-949-1906** today to make an appointment and start down the road to better hearing.

