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Frequently Asked Questions About Hearing Aids

Will a hearing aid restore my hearing to normal?

No, nor will it prevent any further loss of hearing. Hearing aids are designed to make things easier to hear; however they do not restore normal functioning of the ear.

Will a hearing aid last forever?

The life of a hearing aid is approximately 5 years. Many hearing aids are still functioning well after 6 years, while others may need some tune-up and repair services.

What type of warranty comes with hearing aids?

Hearing aids come with two types of warranties: repair and loss/damage. The repair warranty is typically 1-2 years and covers routine maintenance, hearing aid checks and program adjustments with the audiologist, as well as the cost of the repair if the hearing aid needs to be sent to the manufacturer to be fixed. The loss/damage warranty covers the cost of the hearing aid (minus a deductible) if the hearing aid is lost or damaged beyond repair. This warranty usually lasts one year and is exhausted once it is used. For instance, the warranty will only cover the cost of a lost hearing aid once. After that, if the replacement hearing aid is lost again, the warranty no longer covers it. Both the repair and loss damage warranties can be extended.

Why do hearing aids cost so much?

Hearing aids cost a lot of money because they are not mass produced, they are custom made for the individual. You can expect to pay from \$1,100 to \$3,100 per hearing aid. The high cost reflects the technology used to develop the miniaturized components of the aid, and the mark-up to cover the audiologist's services. Additionally, the cost of follow-up visits with the audiologist and repair costs are included in this price while the hearing aid is under warranty.

How long do hearing aid batteries last?

This depends on the number of hours per day the hearing aid is worn and the type of battery. The larger the battery, the longer it will last. A battery can last anywhere from one week to three weeks.

I have hearing loss in both ears, is it necessary to wear two hearing aids?

There are a few reasons why two hearing aids can be better than one:

1. Better hearing in noise.
2. Improved sense of direction for sounds.
3. Preventing possible deterioration of the unaided ear.

We hear in our brain, not in our ears. The ultimate goal of hearing aids is not just to send sound into the ear. It is also essential to retrain the central auditory system in the brain. While it is uncertain whether hearing sensitivity (ability to hear soft sounds) will decrease if your ear is not stimulated adequately, research now suggests that there can be changes in the way in which your brain processes sound when it is "starved." Thus, providing stimulation may be important in preserving your auditory potential.

How much time is needed to adapt to hearing aids?

While each person's experience will vary, hearing aids may allow a person to hear certain sounds they have not heard before (or have not heard for many years). Relearning takes place in the central auditory system and the brain needs some time to learn to use the new sound. You will have a trial period that allows you to adjust to the new sound and evaluate your benefit from the aids.

Why do some hearing aids whistle (feedback)?

There are two types of acoustic feedback in hearing aids: internal feedback from the hearing aid - indicating a device in need of repair; and the more common external feedback produced by a leakage of amplified sound out of the ear canal and back into the microphone of the hearing aid. It is NORMAL for feedback to occur when the hearing aid is being inserted or removed or when your hand is cupped near the device. If however, you experience feedback when you speak, chew, yawn or change position, you need to consult your audiologist. Feedback is more likely to occur in smaller hearing devices because the microphone is closer to the area at which the sound comes out into the ear. So, a behind-the-ear style may be less likely to produce feedback than in in-the-canal style device.