

Hearing Better for a Happier Life

According to the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders, about one in three people between the ages of 65 and 74 have hearing loss and nearly half of those older than 75 have difficulty hearing.

If you are experiencing a decline in how you hear, it may be time to invest in a hearing aid. There are several considerations you should make before committing to a certain model. Make sure to get your doctor's opinion on the option that is most efficient in your situation.

Here are some factors to consider before you begin shopping.

KEY FEATURES

Hearing devices typically consist of four basic components: a microphone, a processor, a receiver and a power source. The microphone recognizes the sounds you hear and transfers them to the processor.

Those sounds are enhanced by the processor, which then amplifies them to your ear canal via the receiver, or speaker. The system is powered by a power source, or battery.

While most operate the



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same, you can find units with other high-tech features. Here are some to look for.

- Automatic gain control picks up on soft sounds while maintaining loud noises at comfortable levels.
- A feedback manager is helpful to minimize annoying whistling, while boosting amplification.
- Noise reduction is great for reducing background noise so

you can concentrate on speech intelligibility.

SET REASONABLE EXPECTATIONS

A hearing aid won't completely restore your hearing, so it's important to understand what you should expect.

Most users experience a better quality of life by picking up on sounds they couldn't hear in the past and enjoying con-

versations without asking someone to repeat themselves.

You also should allow yourself time to adjust to the new type of hearing experience. There may be a short period before you feel comfortable with your new earpiece and its capabilities.

ASSISTIVE LISTENING DEVICE

In addition to a hearing aid,

take advantage of assistive listening devices that can make an aid more effective. Installing wireless systems or neck loops in rooms in which you have difficulty hearing can make the sounds more prevalent to someone with a hearing aid.

Before making a purchase, check with your insurance policy to see if they help cover the cost. Some high-end models can be expensive.