

Mountain Regional Ear, Nose & Throat

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Frequently Asked Questions About Hearing Aids

How do I determine if I am a candidate for hearing aids?

You must first determine whether you have trouble hearing, & how much it impacts your daily function. By having your hearing tested, your audiologist can help determine how much loss is present and discuss your treatment options.

Will hearing aids restore my hearing to normal?

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

Will my hearing aids last forever?

The life of a hearing aid is approximately five years. Many hearing aids still function well after five years, while others may need repair service or replacement.

Do hearing aids use special batteries?

The majority of hearing aids use zinc-air batteries. This kind of battery is made specifically for hearing aids & comes in a variety of sizes. Batteries can be purchased at almost any store that sells regular batteries, including your pharmacy & grocery store.

How long do batteries last?

This depends on the number of hours per day the aid is worn & type of battery. The larger the battery, the longer it will last. Smaller batteries need replacing within one week, while larger batteries may last 2-3 weeks. You may also have the option of purchasing rechargeable batteries along with a charging cradle. Your audiologist can give you several tips on extending battery life, or give you info on rechargeable batteries!

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 for many years). Re-learning takes place in the central auditory nervous system. The brain needs some time to sort out this new information entering the ears! You will have a 30-day trial period with your new hearing aids.

I have hearing loss in both ears; is it necessary to wear two hearing aids? Why are two hearing aids better than one?

- **Better Hearing in Noise:** Hearing in noise can be improved if the signal reaching each ear arrives at a slightly different moment in time. This can help the brain process a speech signal more efficiently.
- **Improved Signal vs. Noise Level:** This is related to the position of the ear in relation to the sound source. If you have an aid in your left ear only and the person speaking to you is on your right, much of the speech signal is lost by the time it gets to your aided ear, while the noise level in the room enters the aided ear at its normal volume level.
- **Improved Localization Ability:** The brain uses the sound entering the ears from the right & left side of the head to determine the direction and location of the sound.

What is the price range for hearing aids?

There are different levels of digital technology – ranging from entry level circuitry to high-level technology. The amount of hearing loss, listening demands & individual preference will be taken into consideration. Some patients will want or need a hearing aid to function automatically while others will enjoy the ability to control sounds. These are decisions that will be made along with your audiologist.

- **HIGH-LEVEL DIGITAL** (\$5200-6000+, for a pair of hearing aids). Good for active lifestyles: Listening in quiet, TV, different background noise levels, music, meetings, & large social gatherings.
- **MID-LEVEL DIGITAL** (\$3800-5500, for a pair of hearing aids). Good for moderately active lifestyles: Listening in quiet, TV, & moderate background noise.
- **BASIC DIGITAL** (\$2400-4500, for a pair of hearing aids). Good for quiet lifestyles: Listening in quiet & mild background noise.

Why do hearing aids cost so much?

Hearing aids are sold in relatively low volume or numbers. The manufacturers also spend a significant amount of time & money on research and development. The purchase price of hearing aids also includes a 1 to 2 year warranty for loss & repairs.

What determines the style of hearing aids I should wear?

Many factors determine which style is most appropriate for you, including: the degree of hearing loss, the shape of the outer ear, the size & shape of the ear canal, manual dexterity, space requirements for special features, excessive wax in the ears, & drainage from canals.

Which manufacturer will make my hearing aids?

Most audiology practices work with several hearing aid manufacturers. We work with three or four manufacturers on a routine basis, depending on the quality of the product and customer service. Some manufacturers are better for more advanced technology or specialized products which may not be available through another manufacturer.

Your audiologist looks forward to helping you in the process of obtaining hearing aids, here at Mountain Regional Ear, Nose & Throat