

TREATING HEARING LOSS WITH HEARING AIDS

HOW THEY HELP & WHAT TO KNOW BEFORE PURCHASING.



Hearing Associates
of Las Vegas

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**Achieving Success With Your Hearing Aids
At Hearing Associates Of Las Vegas**

Introduction

Those with sensorineural hearing loss have trouble with everyday sounds reaching their inner ear. But most of these cases can be greatly improved with the use of hearing aids. However, selecting the right hearing aid to meet your needs (both physically and financially) can be a stressful process. Studying this guide and speaking with a local hearing care provider are two great ways to narrow down your options and pinpoint the best set of hearing aids to begin your hearing rehabilitation.

Considering the many options of hearing aids available today, purchasing hearing aids online or from a one-size-fits-all provider runs the risk of being fit with a hearing aid that does not suit your needs and lifestyle. This could result with you having a set of hearing aids that you do not enjoy wearing and keep them in your desk drawer. By working with a local hearing care provider, you have access to more testing, hearing aid models, financing plans, tech features, and fine tuning to customize your listening experience. Once you've been fitted for your selected hearing aids, your hearing care professional will visit with you often to alter the settings, adjust the fit, clean the devices, and work with you to ease you back into the world of sound. Guidance from an experienced hearing care provider is the best way to bring back your hearing and make your financial investment in hearing health worth while.

Study the guide so you can become familiar with styles and available features. Then speak with your local hearing care provider with an open mind, listen to their recommendations, express any and all concerns you might have, and get ready to hear the world around you once again.





Brain Health Suffers With Prolonged Hearing Loss

According to the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders, one out of eight individuals in the United States ages 12 and older have bilateral (both ears) hearing loss. Sadly, when hearing loss goes undiagnosed and untreated, a number of primary brain functions suffer.

Hearing Loss Affects Balance

Hearing loss can be more easily corrected the sooner it is detected. Overtime, unaddressed hearing loss may lead to deteriorated mental health including dementia, depression, and overall brain shrinkage. Studies by Johns Hopkins have also shown an increased risk of falling due to hearing loss(1). Because there is such a high demand of cognitive skills on the brain to make up for lost hearing, our cognitive ability to balance pays the price.

"Gait and balance are things most people take for granted, but they are actually very cognitively demanding. If hearing loss imposes a cognitive load, there may be fewer cognitive resources to help with maintaining balance and gait."

- Frank Lin, M.D, Ph.D. at Johns Hopkins

Hearing Loss Puts Added Stress On Cognitive Functions

Among countless studies performed to better understand the effects hearing loss has on our cognitive abilities, one particular theme repeats itself: seniors with hearing loss are significantly more likely to develop dementia over time than those who retain their hearing(2).

"...volunteers with hearing loss, undergoing repeated cognition tests over six years, had cognitive abilities that declined some 30 percent to 40 percent faster than in those whose hearing was normal. Levels of declining brain function were directly related to the amount of hearing loss, the researchers say. On average, older adults with hearing loss developed a significant impairment in their cognitive abilities 3.2 years sooner than those with normal hearing."

Hearing Loss Has A Negative Effect On Vocabulary and Speech

When your hearing starts to decline, so does your ability to hear specific frequencies associated with different letters used in everyday speech. This makes understanding and identifying words spoken by another person very difficult. If hearing loss remains untreated, those letters that you struggle to hear become letters that you'll struggle to say. If you notice that 'S' and 'F' are hard to hear, over time your brain will start to ignore these sounds. In turn, as you speak you will likely stumble over (or entirely skip) 'S' and 'F' in your own speech.

Hearing Loss Affects Self-Confidence

Dr. Dale Carrison, Head of ER and Chief of Staff at UMC of Southern Nevada shares his personal experience with hearing loss and the effect it can have on anyone struggling to hear the world around them.

"[People with hearing loss] begin to withdraw from outside activities initially, simply because they can't hear. They feel uncomfortable in social situations because you realize you're laughing just because everyone else is laughing and not because you heard the joke...For some people, the depression starts at that time...When you can't hear music anymore, you can't hear your friends, you get in a gathering and can't interact because you can't hear, all those things start to isolate you. All those things start to affect your brain and start to affect your mental health in a negative way."

-Dr. Dale Carrison, UMC of Southern Nevada Chief of Staff and Head of ER

While science has linked hearing loss to a number of negative neurological problems in older adults, it can also be said that hearing loss can have a huge impact on our overall confidence and mood.

When we struggle to hear, it can be embarrassing to take part in group conversations. Those with hearing loss often find themselves avoiding social situations, isolating themselves, and soon dealing with depression and a lack of self-confidence.

Anyone with mild to severe sensorineural hearing loss is likely to see a significant improvement in hearing and quality of life with the use of hearing aids. On this subject, Robyn Lofton, BC-HIS—owner of Hearing Associates of Las Vegas and National Board Certified Hearing Instrument Specialist—says:

"It is a wonderful feeling to experience the joy on a patient's face when they can hear again. It lights up the room! They can hear the birds singing again, the joyful stories told by a young grandchild, conversations with forever friends at dinner in a restaurant, the TV with the sound at a normal level or just the simple opportunity to hear your spouse the first time and not have to ask them to repeat it again. Our patients define it as a sense of feeling alive again."



The Brain's Need For Binaural Hearing

The financial impact of purchasing hearing aids may cause someone to consider buying only one hearing aid for their ear that may be struggling more to hear. While the cost benefit may seem beneficial, there are significant advantages to using a hearing aid in each ear.

Using two ears to hear helps us to localize sound sources and understand speech in difficult listening situations. If you're in a group setting, at a restaurant, outside on a windy day, or in a loud venue, binaural hearing is essential for spacial awareness and filtering out unwanted noises - the sounds you don't want to pay attention to, like traffic or another tables conversation at the restaurant.

Imitating natural binaural hearing by using two hearing aids makes many situations more comfortable. You can locate and focus on individual speakers when participating in a group conversation. Driving through traffic is safer when you can recognize where sounds are coming from and respond accordingly.

By only using one ear to hear, the brain does not receive the complete picture of sound and will struggle to process and decode the information, especially when in noisy environments. We lose our ability to hear depth perception and spatial awareness. This is why two ears are always better than one. When you have hearing loss in both ears you are typically a candidate for two hearing aids. This is something that your hearing care professional will test you for.

Advantages to wearing **two hearing aids:**

- **Spatial sense which gives us the ability to localize where sounds are coming from**
- **Better speech understanding by giving the brain the complete picture of sound to process**
- **Better hearing amid background noise**
- **Wider range of hearing**



Limitations to only wearing one hearing aid:

- **Inability to localize where sounds are coming from**
- **Difficulty understanding speech when in noisy environments**
- **Limited range of hearing making it harder for your brain to process the sound**

While two ears are better than one, in some cases two ears are not an option. Single-sided deafness (SSD) is a condition in which someone has lost hearing completely in one ear and has normal to profound hearing loss in the other ear. This can be caused by physical damage to the ear, circulatory system disorders, head trauma, acoustic neuroma, Meniere's disease or ear infections in some cases.

There are different solutions available for SSD patients. Your hearing care professional will be able to discuss those options with you at your appointment.

Long-Term Health Benefits With Hearing Aids

Hearing aids keep the auditory nerve active.

The auditory nerve requires continual input to stay healthy and active. Hearing loss impairs the transmission of sound through the auditory nerve. After a period of time, untreated hearing loss leads the auditory nerve to die, which impacts our ability to hear and comprehend what different sounds and words mean. With the use of hearing aids, this problem can be averted.

Cognitive decline can be prevented with hearing aids.

Recent research has been discovering concerning links between hearing loss, cognitive decline, and dementia. Some studies have shown that without the ability to hear and have the brain activated by sound, cognitive decline occurs. Those who use hearing aids have none-to-minimal decline. There are even clinical trials that report that cognitive decline was reversed in participants who used hearing aids.

Tinnitus can be minimized or even alleviated with hearing aid use.

Along with correcting hearing loss, hearing aids can be used to manage tinnitus. While there is no cure for tinnitus, hearing aids can double as sound generators, allowing soothing sounds to emit directly into the ear and minimize or even alleviate tinnitus symptoms. With the background sounds coming through the hearing aids, the tinnitus is less noticeable than it would be in a quiet environment.





Hearing Aid Types

How Hearing Aids Work



*Someone
says hello*

Sound is captured by the microphone inside the hearing aid and converted into an electrical signal or numerical code.

The converted sound is then calculated using customized digital algorithms based on your level of hearing loss, personal preference, and needs.

The signal is converted back into sound and projected to the inner ear, bypassing the damaged hair cells in the cochlea to reach the auditory nerve. The auditory nerve receives the sound and carries it to the brain to process what was heard.

*We hear them
say hello*



Analog vs Digital Hearing Aids

There are two primary electronic versions of the hearing aid: analog and digital. While the general idea of capturing sound and transferring it to the auditory nerve is the same, analog and digital hearing aids convert the sound differently.

Analog Hearing Aids	Digital Hearing Aids
Analog hearing aids will convert sound waves into electrical signals which are then amplified and sent to the auditory nerve. Analog hearing aids require programming by a hearing care provider.	Digital hearing aids convert sound into numerical codes and use different algorithms to personalize the listening experience. Digital hearing aids require programming by a hearing care provider.
Advantages: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - generally less expensive than digital hearing aids. 	Advantages: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - offers more sensitive programming for better customization. - many more options available to choose from. - greater control over the amplification of sound. - can be programmed to increase or decrease the pitch and/or frequency of captured sounds.
Disadvantages: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - offers less settings than digital hearing aids which may be limiting to the user. - cannot provide the personalization that a digital hearing aid can. - many less options to choose from. 	Disadvantages: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - higher price point for the most advanced digital hearing aids (though many affordable options when considering more baseline devices).



Hearing Aid Styles

Two basic hearing aid styles exist: Behind-The-Ear and In-The-Ear. There are many variations of these two styles, but they are categorized by whether the main body of the hearing aid rests on or in the ear. There are advantages and disadvantages to both. It is important to work with a specialist to determine which fit is best for you. The style of the hearing aid can affect performance, durability and cosmetics.

Behind-The-Ear Hearing Aids



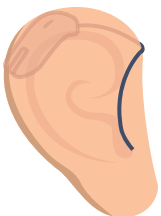
Behind-The-Ear (BTE) - Worn behind the ear with tubing connected to an earmold, BTE hearing aids work for all levels of hearing loss as well as all ages. Due to its size, more technology can be placed in BTE hearing aids such as directional microphones, Bluetooth, telecoils. Also because of their size they are the most durable hearing aid. They are easy to handle, so if you lack dexterity, these hearing aids are a nice option. They also fit a large battery that can last 2-3 weeks.

Some downsides of BTE hearing aids are that they are the most visible style of hearing aid and can be sensitive to wind interference.



Mini Behind-The-Ear (Mini BTE) - The Mini BTE is smaller than traditional BTE hearing aids but includes many of the same features such as directional microphones, telecoils, and longer battery life than In-The-Ear hearing aid styles. When selecting a Mini BTE hearing aid, you can choose either an earmold or a receiver to sit within your ear.

While this style of hearing aid is smaller than the full-size BTE, it is still a visible hearing aid.



Receiver-In-Canal (RIC/RITE) - This is one of the most popular styles that hearing aid users choose to wear. Like BTE hearing aids, RIC hearing aids require the main body of the device to sit behind your ear. Because of its small size it is one of the most discreet hearing aids available. The RIC hearing aid has a thin wire extending from the body of the hearing aid to the receiver which rests in your ear canal. These hearing aids are easy to clean and better for those with limited dexterity. Because of their size, they also have the potential to house more tech features. They offer both an open fit as well as closed fit allowing anyone with a mild to severe hearing loss to choose the RIC as an option. Battery life is anywhere from 5-10 days with a standard battery or 10-12 months with a rechargeable battery.

In-The-Ear Hearing Aids



In-The-Ear (ITE) - Largest of the hearing aids which rest in the ear, the ITE hearing aids are custom-made to fit in your ear. They are the only ITE type of hearing aid which works for all levels of hearing loss and are large enough to come with tech extras like directional microphones and telecoils. ITE hearing aids are also a better option for those with limited dexterity. Battery life is 12-14 days.

While the ITE style hearing aid rests in your ear, there is still a highly visible portion, as they can take up a full or half-shell space in your ear. They can also cause feelings of occlusion if not vented properly.



In-The-Canal (ITC) - The ITC hearing aid style is more discreet than the ITE style and is also custom-made to fit your ear. These hearing aids have a longer battery life (12-14 days) than the CIC or IIC hearing aid styles and can be moderately easy to handle.

As these hearing aids rest more in your ear, they are more susceptible to moisture damage and earwax buildup. You may also feel occluded by the ITC hearing aid style and still have a visible portion.



Completely-In-Canal (CIC) - Relatively invisible, the CIC hearing aid rests inside of your ear canal. You still have high sound fidelity even with its position in your ear, and the CIC is custom-made for a comfortable fit. Battery life ranges from 6-8 days. CIC style hearing aids rest almost entirely within your ear, making them more susceptible to moisture damage and earwax buildup. They also require more dexterity for handling and battery replacement.



Invisible-In-Canal (IIC) - As the name indicates, the IIC style hearing aid sits completely within your ear canal with no visible portion, aside from the clear removal string. It is custom-made to fit comfortably in your ear.

As it is very small, those with limited dexterity will struggle to handle these hearing aids. The IIC also have a shorter battery life of 4-7 days and can be very susceptible to moisture damage and earwax buildup. This is a great option if you are looking for something that is completely invisible.



Lyric - The only 24/7 hearing aid, Lyric hearing aids sit deep inside the ear canal. It does not require batteries that you have to replace, and remains in the ear while you sleep. You can use the SoundLync tool to adjust the volume of your Lyric, remove it if needed, and adjust the power and sleep setting.

These hearing aids require a yearly subscription and must be placed by a licensed Lyric-certified hearing care provider. They are also water-resistant but should not be submerged via swimming or diving.

For a quick reference of the various available hearing aid styles, you can consult the table below.

Hearing Aid Style	Degree of Hearing Loss Treated	Hearing Aid Style Pros	Hearing Aid Style Cons
Behind-The-Ear	Mild-to-severe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Easy to clean -Easy to use -Strongest amplification -Can contain more tech 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Most visible style -Sensitive to wind -Occlusion
Mini-Behind-The-Ear	Mild-to-moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Easy to clean -Use earmolds or receiver -Less wind sensitive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Still visible style -Small size difficult to handle
Receiver-In-Canal	Mild-to-moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Easy to clean -Easy to use -Can contain more tech -Discreet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Can be visible on some ears. -Sensitive to wind
In-The-Ear	Mild-to-severe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Custom-made -Low-profile -Easy to use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Visible style -Occlusion
In-The-Canal	Mild-to-mildly severe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Custom-made -Fairly discrete -Optional tech -Longer battery life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Slightly visible -Susceptible to earwax and moisture -Occlusion
Completely-In-Canal	Mild-to-moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Custom-made -Generally unseen -Minimal feedback -High sound clarity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Short battery life -Susceptible to earwax and moisture -Difficult dexterity
Invisible-In-Canal	Mild-to-moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Custom-made -Invisible in use -None-to-minimal feedback -High sound clarity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Short battery life -Susceptible to earwax and moisture -Difficult dexterity
Lyric	Mild-to-moderately severe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Completely invisible -24/7 use -High sound clarity -No battery or repairs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Subscription required -Provider help required

CROS and BiCROS Hearing Aids

If your hearing loss is due to SSD (single-sided deafness), consider using a CROS or BiCROS hearing aid. These particular hearing instruments are specifically designed to help patients with SSD to hear better. We are able to accomplish this by placing a device on the poor ear which transmits sounds to your better ear. If you have a hearing loss in your better ear, the device on that side can act as a hearing aid as well.

Other solutions involve surgical implants such as the Bone-Anchored Hearing Aid (BAHA). This is when a titanium screw is anchored in the skull bone behind the deaf ear. A vibrating sound processor is attached externally, which reads sounds and transmits them through the skull bone to the cochlea of the good ear.





Hearing Aid Features

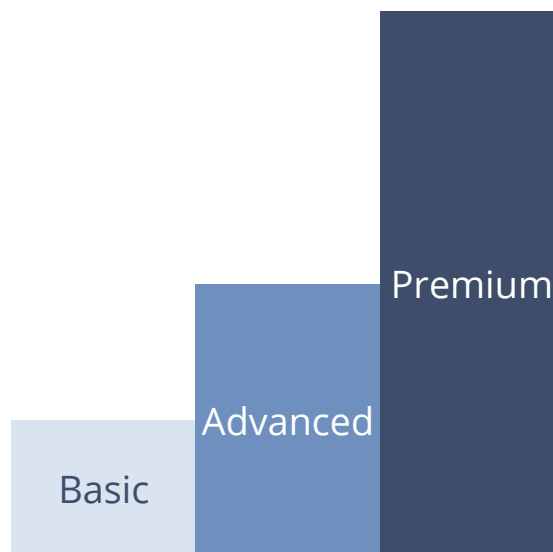
Thanks to constant innovation, modern digital hearing aids come with a wide variety of features to improve your hearing experience. Different features available will vary based on the hearing aid style and manufacturer.

Below is a chart covering common hearing aid features:

Hearing Aid Feature	Function of Feature	Benefit of Feature
Digital Noise Reduction	Reduces noise interference from speech and environmental sounds	Less noise pollution and improved clarity
Impulse Noise Reduction	Allows the hearing aid to differentiate between normal speech and sharp sounds	Sharp sounds are not amplified, and speech is enhanced
Wind Reduction	Reduces wind interference when sound signals are processed	Improved outdoor signal quality and hearing comfort
Feedback Management	Controls noises which leave the ear and create uncomfortable feedback sounds	Improved comfort with fewer feedback noises
Directional Microphone Systems	Allows for sound isolation in direction of microphone while eliminating background sounds	Greater speech comprehension with less noise pollution
Binaural Processing	Hearing aids communicate and work together to manage sound input	Clearer sound capturing, fewer sound processing delays, and less noise
Multiple Compression Channels	Increases volume of speech sounds while reducing the impact of loud environmental sounds	Increased sound speech quality, more comfortable listening
Learning / Training	Hearing aids learn from your settings input and remember	Faster listening adjustment, less handling required
Data Logging / Storage	Preferred listening settings are stored on hearing aid memory unit	Hearing instrument specialist can access information for hearing aid adjustments
Multiple Programs	Listening programs stored on hearing aid and can be accessed as needed	Easy swaps between various listening environments, greater listening clarity

Automatic Programming	Hearing aid automatically changes settings as it recognizes particular hearing environments	Improves ease of use, hands-free adjustment, and develops more over time
Bluetooth / Wireless Connectivity	Connect hearing aids to TV, smartphone, tablet, or other Bluetooth-enabled devices	Enjoy hands-free sync and improved clarity
Telecoil / Auto Telecoil	Use loop systems to stream sounds from various audio systems like the telephone, theater, and lecture hall	Improve clarity and quality of audio in difficult hearing environments
FM Compatibility	Allows hearing aid connection to FM system	Often helps children, easy to use and increased audio quality
Dust & Water-Resistance	Keeps dust and some moisture out of the hearing aid	Greater protection for hearing aid circuitry, extends lifespan
Rechargeable Batteries	Holds charge for 24-28 hours, and can be recharged to power hearing aids	No need to buy disposable batteries or change batteries out

Selecting the Best Hearing Aid Technology



The technology available in today's hearing aids is much more complex than what patients have seen in the past and it's for good reason. Hearing aids of today use artificial intelligence (A.I.) which gives them the ability to have machine learning. Meaning the more you wear your devices the smarter they become. The use of A.I. allows your hearing aid to personalize your listening experience uniquely to your individual lifestyle. The different features of your hearing aid all work together to make hearing easier than ever before. The difference between Basic, Advanced, and Premium technology has become more important than in previous years.

The more advanced the hearing aid technology is the more natural the sound picture can become, making it easier to listen, especially when in background noise. This personalization will help take the strain out of listening so hard when in a restaurant, at a meeting, visiting with family, and many more complex listening environments.

Different lifestyles require different levels of technology. Basic level technology will be less expensive than advanced or premium and is a good budget option. However, choosing basic technology for your hearing aids when your lifestyle requires something more advanced can end up costing you more in the long run. It is important to spend time with your hearing care professional to determine which technology is best suited for your individual needs.

Benefits To More Features In Your Hearing Aid

The many functions available in today's hearing aid technology are designed to improve your everyday listening experience.

Your hearing care professional has more tools available for programming a premium set of hearing aids, making them more automated so that you do not have to manually adjust them. More advanced hearing aids can be programmed for specific, everyday scenarios. These hearing aids would automatically adjust for a particular environment - from loud restaurants to quiet living room conversations. Technology that is more basic does not have quite as many automatic adjustments available and would often require manual adjustments as you change between noisy and quiet places.

"It is so important to have a good quality hearing aid because it does more than just magnify sound. Everybody can get hearing aids that magnify sounds, but the ability to discriminate at the frequencies for your hearing loss, and not just make everything louder,... makes it a more normal hearing."

-Dr. Dale Carrison, UMC of Southern Nevada Chief of Staff and Head of ER

With more advanced features in your hearing aid, the sounds around you are more natural. Premium hearing aids with more advanced features ease the burden of trying to listen and makes hearing an effortless act once again.



Discovering Which Hearing Aid Is Best For You

It is recommended that you work with a hearing care provider to best understand your hearing needs and therefore, the best set of hearing aids to rehabilitate your hearing loss. A hearing care professional will fit your hearing aid so they are comfortable and unburdensome. They will work with you to assess your needs based on your lifestyle and level of hearing loss. Then, your provider can adjust the settings within your hearing aid, allowing the many features to work together to provide an effortless and worthwhile hearing experience.

Today's hearing aids are very advanced, with many features that work together to create a comfortable and exceptional listening experience. However, a hearing aid is only as good as the professional that fits it. It is important to work with a licensed hearing care provider that is familiar with current hearing aid models. They should be knowledgeable of the product they are fitting.

Work with the licensed hearing care provider to try different hearing aid models before purchasing them. Rehabilitation with a hearing aid can take weeks and even months for some to fully acclimate. A trial run with them before purchasing will give both you and your provider the ability to see that the technology you have been fit with is the right hearing aid needed for your journey to better hearing.

*"The difference [when using hearing aids] is absolutely amazing. You're able to look at someone and have a conversation and not have to go "huh?", "excuse me?", "what?"
It's a tremendous difference. It was life-changing, essentially."*

- Dr. Dale Carrison, UMC Southern Nevada Head of ER and Chief of Staff



Purchasing Hearing Aids

When purchasing a hearing aid there are many factors to consider. This can be overwhelming when trying to do it on your own. Partner with a professional who can walk you through the steps and help simplify the process. Purchasing the most expensive hearing aid is not always the best option for every lifestyle and budget. The same goes with buying the least expensive one. Since quality of life while wearing hearing aids is determined by the technology needed for your lifestyle, be sure to purchase the best technology you can afford. A licensed and trained professional can take you through the process of determining which is the best fit for you.

The Cost of Hearing Aids

Hearing aids will bring about a significant change to your quality of life. What determines the cost of each hearing aid is the instrument itself as well as ongoing professional services to keep them working as time goes on and your hearing changes. Hearing aids are very different than owning a computer or TV. They require a great deal of professional service and maintenance. Think of hearing aids as physical therapy for your ears. You will need to have routine check ups and maintenance, as well as programming and adjustments done throughout the life of the instrument.

With regular care and maintenance, digital hearing aids will last the user an average of 3-5 years and cost between \$1,000-\$3,500 per ear. While the initial investment is costly, even the most expensive hearing aids will average \$3.50 per day over the life of the device.

Look for a licensed hearing care provider who will include a multitude of services with the price of your hearing aid, including:

- **Annual hearing tests**
- **Hearing aid demonstration**
- **Lifetime of the hearing aids adjustments and maintenance**
- **Office visits**
- **Factory warranty on hearing aids**
- **Lost and damage insurance policy**
- **Hearing aid programming**
- **Regular in-office hearing aid cleaning**

"Your hearing aid is only as good as the person who fits you. There is a lot to the sophisticated computers inside of your hearing aid, and having someone who is knowledgeable in the technology and takes a personal caring approach to treat your needs is the necessary combination for success."

-Robyn Lofton, BC-HIS

Financing Options

While hearing aids are an incredible tool for improving your lifestyle, the cost can be overwhelming. Many older adults on fixed incomes are faced with the task of paying for hearing aids out of their own pockets, requiring them to set aside for months, to borrow money from family members, or seek assistance in some ways. Fortunately, there are a number of financing options available when it comes to purchasing hearing aids.

Financing options range from payment plans to third party credit options. Look for a hearing aid provider that offers a financing option that allows you to purchase the best hearing aids to treat your hearing loss.

Common Financing Options	
Credit Cards	Most clinics accept all major credit cards, including American Express, Discover, Visa, and MasterCard.
CareCredit	Health financing through a third-party with a variety of payment options including 12 months interest-free and extended payment plans up to 60 months.
HealthiPlan	Health financing through a third-party with a variety of payment options including 12 months interest-free and extended payment plans up to 60 months.
Wells Fargo	Health financing through a third-party with a variety of payment options including 12 months interest-free and extended payment plans up to 60 months.
Flexible Spending Account	Hearing aids can qualify as a necessary medical expense for which your FSA can be applied towards.
Health Savings Account	Hearing aids can qualify as a necessary medical expense for which your HSA can be applied towards.

Warranties For Devices

Most hearing aid manufacturers offer two or three year warranties to cover their devices. These warranties will often cover major repairs such as:

- **Damaged cases**
- **Wiring issues**
- **One-time full replacement**

As the average hearing aid is expected to last between three to five years, the manufacturers' warranties are not expected to cover the entire lifetime of the hearing aid. That is why it is so important to work with a hearing aid provider who offers you lifetime care for your hearing aids. Many licensed hearing care providers may also offer privately provided extended warranties within their office.

Insurance Assistance

Some insurance plans may cover a portion of the cost of hearing aids. Most providers will happily work with you to see if your health insurance company or Medicare will cover any or all of your hearing aid purchase. Be sure to provide your hearing aid specialist with your insurance information before or at your appointment so that they can check for you.

Another Potential Hearing Aid Coverage Route

If you are struggling to afford your desired hearing aids, the Starkey Hearing Foundation may be able to help. Through the foundation's [Hear Now assistance program](#), patients have received heavily discounted hearing aids(3). By contacting the Starkey Hearing Foundation at (800) 328-8602, you can receive more information about this charitable program.





Adjusting To Life With Hearing Aids

New hearing aids will bring about many new changes to your everyday listening experiences. Once you have begun to wear hearing aids, you can expect to make certain adjustments to your daily routine to better acclimate to this new tool.

What To Expect

Each patient, with their unique level of hearing loss and individual needs, will have a different experience adjusting to hearing aids, however; there are some general things you can expect in the months following this new lifestyle change.

It will take time to adjust to your hearing aids.

Going from a degree of hearing loss to restored hearing can be overwhelming. The average hearing aid wearer takes about 5-7 years of living with the hearing loss before getting help. Some even take longer before beginning their journey with a hearing aid. The longer the hearing loss goes untreated the harder it can be to bring back. As with any hearing loss, it takes time to adjust and relearn how to hear again. Small sounds like the closing of a drawer or even the sound of your own voice may sound odd. New sounds should never be uncomfortable, different yes, but not uncomfortable. If you are experiencing discomfort or too many loud noises, you can easily adjust the settings of your hearing aid through an app on your smartphone, a button on your hearing aid, or in the office with your hearing professional. This is very common as patients adapt to their restored ability to hear. Give yourself time to adjust. For the most effective transition, wear your hearing aids daily and always reach out to your hearing aid provider to see how they can help you through this process if you are having any problems. The more you wear them, especially when you think you don't need them, the better your experience will be when your hearing loss needs more correcting.

Hearing aids require daily care.

A hearing aid is essentially a small computer that rests in your ear. To work properly, these devices must be cleaned daily to avoid build up from earwax and moisture. The better patients care for their hearing aids, the longer the hearing aid will care for the patient!



A perfect fit is necessary for optimal hearing.

You may have heard friends or family members complain of feedback sounds from their hearing aids such as static or whistling noises. These problems can often be attributed to a poorly fitted hearing aid. For the best results from your hearing aid, reinsert it multiple times to make sure they are positioned in your ear correctly. If problems persist, contact your hearing aid provider to see how they can correct this issue.

The “perfect hearing aid” doesn’t exist.

While there may not be a perfect hearing aid, there will be one that is best fit for you. By working with a licensed professional, they will help you in choosing the best hearing aid for your needs. Selecting a hearing aid is much more than a one-size-fits-most solution. While some models may be more technologically advanced than others, the perfect hearing aid for you will depend on a number of specifics, including your level of hearing loss, lifestyle, maintenance requirements, cost, and more. With a specialist’s help, you can be sure to find the best hearing aid tailored to your needs.

Caring For Your Hearing Aids

One of the best ways to ensure hearing aids work properly is to provide regular care. This caretaking takes two forms—home maintenance and in-office care.

When you are at home, there are several things you should be regularly doing for your hearing aids:

Daily cleaning - Before putting your hearing aids away for the night, you should always wipe them down with a soft microfiber cloth and a toothbrush. This step will help prevent the buildup of wax and moisture that can shorten the life of your hearing aids.

Vent pick use - Once a week, use a hearing aid vent pick to clean the various openings on your hearing aids. While you should be careful not to damage anything by pressing too hard, it is important to remove any earwax or debris which may have lodged themselves in your hearing aids.

Battery changes - Depending on the hearing aid you choose, you may need to replace your hearing aid batteries weekly. When you change them, briefly clean the contacts to keep corrosion from occurring.

Also, as you put your hearing aids away, pop the battery doors open to keep from having electricity circulate through your hearing aid when you are not using them. In the case of rechargeable hearing aids, always make sure the battery contacts on your hearing aids are clean before placing them on their charger.

Check your settings - If your hearing aids are not working, it can often be a problem with what program setting is being used. Before you worry too much, check to see if the volume is just too low or if you are using a hearing setting better suited to a different environment.

Aside from hearing aid care performed at home, there is a certain amount of hearing aid care which requires professional help.

Hearing counseling and rehabilitation.

To help your experience with hearing aids to be a success, hearing aid counseling and rehabilitation play a vital role. During the counseling, you will receive specific advice on how to use your hearing aids effectively, education concerning hearing aid use, and give you an opportunity to ask any questions you have.

Aural rehabilitation is often provided by professional hearing aid providers. This service provides you with targeted strategies to improve your ability to listen with strengthened hearing and more effective communication.

Hearing aid adjustments.

In most cases, hearing aids need to be adjusted several times after the initial fitting before your ideal listening requirements are met. Whether it's a re-cast earmold or listening programs adjusted, a licensed hearing care provider can help fine-tune your hearing aids. New hearing aid wearers typically start out at about 75% in volume of what they actually need. As they start to wear the hearing aid more and their ears become stronger, they become used to the amplification of sound. What once was loud is no longer loud anymore. Adjustments will be made in the office during the aural rehabilitation process to bring you to your full 100% target gain.

Regular professional cleaning.

You should also bring your hearing aids in for professional cleaning every three months. These cleanings can make your hearing aids cleaner than you can make them at home and allow the provider to check to see that the devices are performing optimally.

Hearing aid repairs

Even with the best care, your hearing aids may need to be repaired. Your hearing aid provider may offer free or discounted repairs for the lifetime of the hearing aid. If the hearing aids are damaged beyond what can be repaired in-house, they can be sent to the manufacturer for repairs.



More On Hearing Rehabilitation

Many people expect that their hearing will be significantly improved just by purchasing a customized set of hearing aids when in reality, there is a longer road to hearing rehabilitation beyond obtaining new hearing aids. Upon receiving your new hearing aids, schedule follow up appointments to address your progress with your hearing aids. By visiting your licensed hearing care provider at a minimum of once a month for the first three months, you are significantly more likely to find success and satisfaction with your hearing aids.

By visiting with your hearing care provider regularly, they can help you to fine tune the settings and fit of your hearing aids to get the best use out of them. If you're finding everyday sounds to be startling and too sharp, this is normal for anyone with new hearing aids. Let your hearing care provider know and they can perform minor adjustments to correct this issue.

If you're still struggling to hear common sounds around you or conversations in social settings, there is more that your hearing care provider can do to adjust your hearing aids so these things are no longer a problem.

Good listening skills are an essential component to understanding speech more clearly. While it is our ears that hear sounds, it is our brain that processes that sound. Untreated hearing loss can damage our natural ability to decode speech sounds. Auditory training will help you learn to listen while hearing. There is auditory training software that the specialist may use in conjunction with your hearing aids to help you in the aural rehabilitation process. This can be done from the comfort of your own home.

It cannot be stressed enough that every patient's experience with hearing aids is unique. Depending on your level of hearing loss, fit of your hearing aid, the technology embedded in your hearing devices, and even certain factors related to your lifestyle will have an impact on the time it takes to reach a comfortable level of hearing rehabilitation. The key is to be patient with yourself and continually reach out to your hearing care provider. Their number one goal is to help you restore your ability to hear because they are aware of the incredible impact this skill has on your happiness, health, and quality of life.

Most importantly, do not give up on your hearing aids. With time and attention, they can be an integral part of your life easing many frustrations for yourself and the loved ones who wish to communicate better with you.

Hearing Aid Tips

Avoid unnecessary damage to your device with the following tips:

- Store hearing aids in a dry, cool, and secure location.
- When removing your hearing aids, do so over a soft surface in case they are accidentally dropped.
- Wash hands thoroughly before handling the hearing aids to avoid transferring oils and other contaminants.
- Work with a hearing professional to remove excess earwax from your ears and prolong the life of your device.
- Check your hearing aid batteries regularly.
- Clean your hearing aids on a regular basis with a soft, microfiber cloth and toothbrush.
- When you are not using your hearing aids, be sure to turn them off.
- Never get your hearing aids wet.
- Protect your hearing aids from hair sprays, body sprays, and other moisture-producing products.
- Avoid placing hearing aids in direct heat (direct sunlight, hot car, near a heater, sauna, etc).
- Store batteries in room temperature, waterproof casing.
- Do not use unauthorized tools to clean your hearing aids. They can damage the delicate circuitry within and void warranties from the manufacturer.
- Remove hearing aids before an MRI, CAT, or other electromagnetic scans.

Most importantly, don't avoid your hearing aids. If they are not performing properly or are uncomfortable, work with a hearing professional to correct the issue. With the right care and attention to detail, your hearing aids can be an incredible tool and comfortable part of everyday life.



Achieving Success With Your Hearing Aids At Hearing Associates Of Las Vegas

Purchasing a hearing aid is a very personal decision you make. Often times one struggles with the idea of a hearing aid for many years before actually doing something about it. When the time comes that you are ready to be fit with a hearing instrument, following these guidelines will help you to achieve success in both choosing a hearing aid and then adjusting to the new world of sound around you that hearing aids bring. Visit Hearing Associates of Las Vegas to have a thorough hearing evaluation performed by our licensed hearing care professionals. We care so much about our patients, their hearing health, and their experience in our office. Past patients can attest to the effort we make to improve the lives of those that come to see us.

Testimonial From Dr. Dale Carrison

"There's just a sense of family when you come here... [Robyn and Lionel] are both interested in your hearing and they're interested in making your life better...It's fun to come in - the feeling you get is warm. You know that they care about you as a person and they care about your hearing. I just can't describe how important that is, not only to me as a physician, but to other patients I've referred to Robyn. They all say the same thing, they all have a tremendous experience... because they feel like someone actually cares about them and their hearing."

-Dr. Dale Carrison, UMC Southern Nevada Head of ER and Chief of Staff

Let us help you as you work to improve your hearing, relationships, and overall quality of life. A complete diagnostic exam and lifestyle assessment for hearing aids should take 60-90 minutes. This process can help detect medical issues that can be treated without a hearing aid. When testing for hearing loss, bring a family member to your appointment. Spouses and other family members are significantly affected by your hearing loss, making it more than a personal issue, but also a family one. Involve them in this process and they will be a great support tool for you. They can work with you to understand your hearing loss and treatment options. It's often very helpful to have a trusted friend or family member with you at your appointment to better retain the information you're given and to create a treatment plan you are confident in.

When deciding on a hearing aid, be sure to remain open minded about recommendations from your hearing care professional. We urge our patients to be open with us and to discuss any questions or concerns they may have. All hearing aid fittings will come with a trial period. Our hearing professionals will be sure to explain this process to you but we also hope to answer any questions you may have. If for any reason during this period you determine you do not want to keep the hearing aids you've chosen, there is a return policy that would allow you to return the instrument to the factory. We can help you to determine the manufacturers return policy and return your hearing aids to them.

A successful hearing aid fitting can often take longer than the trial period to achieve. However, during the trial period you should be able to see progress. Enough progress that gives you confidence in both your choice of hearing aid and the professional you have chosen to work with to know that you are on the right path. Hearing Associates of Las Vegas offers extended trials on an as-needed basis.

It is normal to feel self-conscious, uncomfortable and not your “usual self” when you first start wearing hearing aids. This is to be expected as it is part of the learning curve. But most importantly, it is temporary. Your hearing aids will help you to feel more confident in social situations. They will help you to feel less stressed and more relaxed. The TV will be easier to understand. You will be able to use your phone more easily and participate more comfortably in conversations in noisy places, meetings, venues, and churches. They will also help you to connect more to other people and feel included.

New hearing aids are a journey. It took time for your hearing loss to get to where it is; therefore, it will take some time to correct. Be patient through the process. Follow through on your appointments and remember to always wear your hearing instruments. The more you wear them, the quicker you will adjust to them.



Hearing Associates of Las Vegas is an independent and family-owned hearing clinic centered around high-quality care. Our genuine interest in our patients is what makes our service so outstanding. We consider all of our patients a part of our hearing family. Our hearing care providers and supporting staff take the time to get to know each patient, their lifestyle needs, and their concerns so that we can provide truly customized care.

Because our hearing clinic is independently owned, we have the freedom to recommend quality products that we genuinely trust and are not bound to any particular brand of hearing aids. This also ensures that our hearing care providers will always make your needs the top priority when offering hearing loss solutions.



"Each patient can know how important their hearing needs are to us, and know that we will always strive our best to deliver a product and customer service that is unmatched. This is one of the reasons that we play Cheers in each of our waiting rooms and share freshly baked cookies. We want our patients to feel like they are at home with us and part of our hearing family."

**-Robyn Lofton, Owner and Lead Practitioner
of Hearing Associates of Las Vegas**

Work with Hearing Associates of Las Vegas and have confidence that our team is putting you first. We want to be there for you during your hearing rehabilitation from start to finish! Contact us today to **[schedule an appointment](#)**.

Resources

1. Johns Hopkins Medicine. "Hearing Loss Linked to Three-Fold Risk of Falling", February 27, 2012. https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/news/media/releases/hearing_loss_linked_to_three_fold_risk_of_falling
2. Johns Hopkins Medicine. "Hearing Loss Accelerates Brain Function Decline in Older Adults", January 23, 2013. https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/news/media/releases/hearing_loss_accelerates_brain_function_decline_in_older_adults
3. Starkey Hearing Aids, Hear Now Program. <https://www.starkeyhearingfoundation.org/Hear-Now>
4. Professional Resource & Commentary from Dr. Dale Carrison. Recipient of the "Inspired Excellence in Healthcare Awards" sponsored by Las Vegas Heals. Chief of staff and head of ER at UMC in Las Vegas