

## Realistic Expectations and Getting Used to Hearing Aids

### REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS:

Hearing aids work very well when fit and adjusted appropriately. They amplify sound! You might find that you like one hearing aid better than the other. The left and right hearing aids will probably not fit exactly the same and they probably won't sound exactly the same. Nonetheless, hearing aids should be comfortable with respect to the physical fit and sound quality. Hearing aids do not restore normal hearing and are not as good as normal hearing. You will be aware of the hearing aids in your ears. Until you get used to it, your voice will sound "funny" when you wear hearing aids. Hearing aids should not be worn in extremely noisy environments. Some hearing aids have features that make noisy environments more tolerable, however, hearing aids cannot eliminate background noise.

### YOUR OWN VOICE:

When you wear hearing aids for the first time, you will probably notice your voice sounds funny! You will hear your voice amplified through the hearing aid. You may describe this sensation as feeling "plugged up" or hearing your voice echoing. This is normal and will usually go away in a few days after you have given yourself a chance to get accustomed to your new hearing aids and learned to adjust the volume control. There are adjustments that the audiologist can do to relieve these symptoms, should these persist beyond the first few days of wearing your new aids.

### GETTING USED TO HEARING AIDS:

People learn at different rates. Some people need a day or two to learn about and adjust to their hearing aids, most need a few weeks and some may need a few months. There is no perfect way to learn about hearing aids. I usually recommend you wear the hearing aids for a few hours the first day, and add about an hour a day for each day that follows. Do not try to set an endurance record. Over a period of time you will lengthen the amount of time that you wear the aid. Eventually you will wear the hearing aids most of your waking hours. It is recommended that you interact with those people you are most familiar with during your first few days. Start off listening with your hearing aids in a favorable listening environment and work towards more difficult listening situations. Let your friends and family know that you are using your new hearing aids.

Helpful Steps to Learning to Use a Hearing Aid:

1. Use the aid at first in your own home environment.
2. Wear the aid only as long as you are comfortable with it.
3. Accustom yourself to the use of the aid by listening to just one other person - husband or wife, neighbor or friend.
4. Do not strain to catch every word.
5. Do not be discouraged by the interference of background noises.
6. Practice locating the source of the sound by listening only.
7. Increase your tolerance for loud sounds.
8. Practice learning to discriminate different speech sounds.
9. Listen to something read aloud.
10. Gradually extend the number of persons with whom you talk, still within your own home environment.

11. Gradually increase the number of situations in which you use your hearing aid.
12. Take part in an organized course of aural rehabilitation, see your audiologist to learn about these courses.

### **PHYSICAL FIT:**

One concern with all new hearing aids is the physical fit. Hearing aids need to be comfortable, not too tight and not too loose, they should fit just right. Do not wear the hearing aids if they cause any discomfort or irritations. Do call your audiologist to schedule an appointment time to remedy the problem as soon as possible. Do not wear them if they are uncomfortable.