

Hearing Aids

Traditional Behind-the-Ear



Overview

A hearing aid is a small device, worn on or in the ear, which amplifies sound and broadcasts it to the eardrum. Hearing aids are used to help those with hearing loss to listen and communicate more clearly. There are several types of hearing aids, and choosing the appropriate device can depend on comfort, size, performance and level of hearing loss.

Traditional Behind-the-Ear (BTE) Hearing Aids

Traditional behind-the-ear hearing aids have two main parts, a plastic case that houses the electronics and rests behind the ear, and a soft, molded piece that fits comfortably in the outer ear. These parts are connected by a clear, plastic tube that carries amplified sound from behind the ear and down into the ear canal. These aids are the largest and most visible devices, but they are the easiest to adjust, can help correct the widest range of hearing loss and are capable of more amplification than other devices.

Mini Behind-the-Ear



Mini Behind-the-Ear (Mini BTE) Hearing Aids

Mini Behind-the-Ear hearing aids are similar to the traditional style, but do not require use of a large molded piece in the ear. All of the electronics are contained in a small case behind the ear, and they direct amplified sound down through a clear plastic tube to a small earbud worn in the ear canal. This style is popular because it is cosmetically pleasing and can accommodate a wide range of hearing loss.

Receiver-in-the-Canal



Receiver-in-the-Canal (RIC) Hearing Aids

Receiver-in-the-Canal hearing aids are similar to behind-the-ear devices but are even more discreet. With this style, the speaker is contained in a tiny unit that is inserted into the ear canal. The speaker is connected by an almost invisible wire that travels from the canal up to a small plastic electronic unit worn behind the ear. This style is popular because it is so inconspicuous. It is appropriate for mild to moderate hearing loss.

Hearing Aids



In-the-Ear



In-the-Ear (ITE) Hearing Aids

In-the-Ear hearing aids are custom made to fill the bowl-shaped depression of the outer ear. They are smaller than behind-the-ear aids, but they are visible to others. In-the-ear aids may pick up wind noise, but volume control is convenient and they are easy to insert into the ear. This style is recommended for those with mild to severe hearing loss.

In-the-Canal (ITC) Hearing Aids

In-the-Canal hearing aids are small devices molded to fit partially inside the ear canal. Because of their small size, in-the-canal aids do not amplify sound as much as other devices and may not come with features such as volume control and directional microphones. This style is only recommended for those with mild to moderate hearing loss.

In-the-Canal



Completely-in-the-Canal (CIC) Hearing Aids

Completely-in-the-Canal hearing aids are molded to fit entirely within the ear canal. They are the smallest, most discreet units available, and are nearly invisible to others. Because of their small size, their power and features are limited. This style is appropriate for mild to moderate hearing loss.

Preparing to Purchase

Before deciding on the most appropriate hearing aid, a thorough examination by a physician should be performed to rule out correctable causes of hearing loss such as excessive earwax, tumor or infection. If a hearing aid is appropriate treatment, the physician can provide a referral to an audiologist who can help in choosing the right device.



Completely-in-the-Canal

