

*Your*

# Helpful Hearing Handbook

*Feel like you are included in everything you do.*



*Keep an active lifestyle.*



*Make every moment count.*

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solutions inc.

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## **Foreword**

We have put this handbook together to help our clients with their hearing and communication needs. Most, if not all, of your questions regarding hearing aids and hearing loss will be answered. Much of this information is what we give our clients on a daily basis.

### **Our goal is to help you make a more informed decision on your selection and purchase of personal hearing devices.**

As hearing healthcare professionals, our job is to evaluate your hearing loss, assess your needs and wants, and counsel you on the solutions available. We not only fit hearing aids, but we also deliver realistic expectations. These realistic expectations can help you decide to move forward and choose the best solution for you.

If you think you may be suffering from hearing loss, we would be happy to give you a straightforward evaluation of your hearing. Our job, whether as Board Certified Hearing Instrument Specialists or Audiologists, is to provide you with the best possible hearing system of your choice.

By reading this handbook, you will better understand the different types of hearing aids and you will be prepared to ask better questions. It is not full of technical terms or theory. This handbook is written so you can understand the information and make the right choices. Wherever you are in New Brunswick or Nova Scotia, you can read this handbook in the comfort of your own home and become better informed about making the decision to purchase new hearing aids for yourself or a loved family member.

If you think you or someone you love may be suffering from hearing loss, the first step is to get a professional evaluation at an ethical hearing center. Take that first step. Hearing aid technology has never been better. Use the information in this handbook to help you make the right decisions. If you have any questions, ask your Hearing Healthcare Professional.

**We hope you enjoy reading this report.**

**We will do our best to not put you to sleep!**

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## Our Promise to You

### **Private, personalized service is our #1 priority!**

We feel that wherever you purchase your hearing aids, service should be a priority. Our offices have the most state-of-the-art equipment to assess your hearing loss and recommend hearing aids if needed. With your purchase, there is always follow-up care. The hearing aid industry is all about service.

We rely on our sense of hearing for so many things - communicating thoughts and ideas, relaxation, entertainment, even safety. We want to make sure you are hearing the best you can.

What to look for in a Hearing Healthcare Professional:

- **Experience** - They should be familiar with all styles of hearing aids.
- **Professionalism** - Make sure you are getting professional service.
- **Location** - This is important because you will be making several visits to that office for testing, fitting, adjustments and **SERVICE**.
- **Availability of Service** - Our offices are open Monday to Friday. You don't know how often you will need service, so you will want to know the office hours before purchasing a hearing aid from any clinic.

It is not a good idea to shop for a hearing aid over the phone. It's best to visit our office, meet our friendly staff, and see our facilities. Our offices have specialized equipment to assess a loss, verify a hearing aid fitting and do follow-up service. Also, you want to meet the person you're going to be dealing with. Make sure you feel comfortable with that person, as you will be seeing them several times.

The price of our hearing aids includes the cost of the hearing aid itself and all of the follow-up service we provide along with your purchase. Sometimes the lowest price may not be best in the long run, because service may be compromised. You will need to have a budget in mind. Buy the best you can because you will be wearing them for a long time.

Make a list of the hearing troubles you are having and what your expectations of hearing aids are. These should be discussed with your specialist. Make sure you understand the benefits and limitations of your hearing aid purchase.

The cheapest price is not always the best way to go.

## **The 100-day, 100% Satisfaction Guarantee Return Policy**

Any clinic dispensing hearing aids is required, by law, to offer you a 30-day trial period. **innovative hearing solutions inc. offers 100 days.**

At innovative hearing solutions, inc. a return of your hearing aids, within 100 days, is a full money back guarantee (minus the cost of custom ear molds if you need them). We do not retain any evaluation or dispensing fees.

## **Hearing Aid Cleaning**

Our offices are equipped with a needle vacuum machine, which allows us to vacuum wax and moisture out of your hearing aids. The majority of all hearing aid repairs are due to wax or moisture build up. We offer free clean and checks of all makes and models of hearing aids. This quick service often will restore the hearing aid and get it working again. There is never any charge for this cleaning service.

## **The Value of Hearing Aids**

Hearing aids should help put you back in touch with your family and social activities. One of the main goals of this report is for our clients to become more knowledgeable about the type of hearing aids they are purchasing. Not everyone gets the same benefit from one type of hearing aid. It depends on your individual hearing loss and lifestyle. At innovative hearing solutions, inc. we have access to hearing aids from 9 different manufacturers. We will find the one that is best suited to you.

Most of us have a prejudice against hearing aids; vanity overrules practicality. Only a small percentage of people with hearing loss actually purchase hearing aids. There is nothing attractive about missing out on conversations or constantly asking others to repeat themselves. Hearing aids should help prevent others from noticing your hearing loss. Today's hearing aids are light-years ahead of the ones your parents or grandparents wore. They are small, comfortable, and barely noticeable. Hearing aids are less conspicuous than your hearing loss. In the case of a severe or profound hearing loss, it may be necessary to have a larger hearing aid to accommodate the hardware needed to deliver the extra power for the loss but even these larger, more powerful hearing aids are much less noticeable than past versions.



## **Do I Need Hearing Aids?**

You May Need Hearing Aids If...

- You have problems hearing in groups of people.
- You have trouble following a conversation when there is background noise.
- You often ask others to repeat what they have said to you.
- Your hearing embarrasses you with strangers.
- Family or friends complain of your TV or radio being too loud.
- Your hearing causes arguments in your family.
- You avoid social activities.
- You have trouble with soft speech, whispers, or children's voices.
- You hear words being said but don't always understand them. Voices sound loud enough but are not clear enough.
- You find you hear better when you see a person's face.
- You feel people mumble or speak too softly.
- Your family members feel you may have a hearing loss.
- You have difficulty hearing on the phone.

There are 3 basic reasons why people do not acquire hearing aids

- 1) the individual does not recognize the problem,
- 2) there is a lack of information on the benefits and costs, and
- 3) vanity.

In many cases, the individual suffering from hearing loss does not recognize the problem. If their hearing has decreased gradually over time, the individual may adjust to the loss gradually and believe that his or her hearing remains normal. If the loss is more sudden or severe, the change in hearing is easier to detect.

## **Benefits to Wearing Hearing Aids**

Hearing aids can significantly enhance the quality of life of the hearing impaired.

- A person with hearing loss would no longer have to ask a dinner partner, or a companion at the movies, what was being said.
- Safety fears would be alleviated by being able to hear a fire alarm, smoke detector, siren or honking horn.
- Career opportunities would open up through better communication on the job.
- New parents or grandparents would not miss a child's first words.
- Church-goers would be able to hear and fully understand the sermon and/or liturgy at their church or synagogue.
- The beautiful sounds of nature, such as waves crashing onto the shore, birds singing in early morning, a favorite pet purring or barking playfully, and rain softly falling on the roof, would not be missed.

The sense of hearing is a crucial part of our lives, both physically and emotionally. By using hearing aids, individuals who suffer from hearing loss can continue to lead productive, full and successful lives. With the correct hearing aids, you should be able to again hear many sounds that have been missing from your life; sounds you have forgotten were a part of your world.

It is important to remember **all hearing losses are different** and the benefits you receive from your aids may be different than others.

Most people say they should have gotten hearing aids sooner once they purchase them. Also, most people wish they had purchased better technology within the first year of wearing hearing aids.

### **No More Isolation**

The majority of people who break down their defenses and get hearing aids have reported significant improvement in their quality of life. According to the National Council on Aging, hearing aids improve:

- Ease of communication and social participation
- Intimacy and warmth in relationships
- One's emotional stability
- One's sense of control over events in life
- Physical health and mental functioning

## Understanding Hearing Loss

You don't "hear" with your ears.

Hearing is an action performed by the brain. It doesn't happen in the ear. When someone comes into our clinic with a "hearing problem" we perform a hearing test. This test is an evaluation of ear function as well as an evaluation of brain function.

When people talk about "hearing", usually they are referring to the ability to communicate with other people using speech. Most of us communicate with others several times a day, so we are pretty good at evaluating our ability, or inability, to understand speech.

### Types of Hearing Loss

**Sensorineural:** This is the most common type of loss

It is permanent hearing loss affecting the nerves of the hearing system. As of yet, medical science cannot repair sensorineural hearing loss. 80% of people with some degree of hearing loss have this type of loss. Hearing aids do not *restore* normal hearing, but sensorineural loss can be *helped* with hearing aids.

**Conductive:** Often a treatable type of loss

This type of hearing loss usually involves the ear canal, ear drum or the middle ear. Sound is blocked by damage or an obstruction, like wax. It is similar to an ear infection. Often, conductive loss can be treated by a doctor. When conductive hearing loss is found to be permanent, hearing aids are a highly successful solution.

**Mixed:** This is hearing loss that is both sensorineural and conductive.

This type of hearing loss involves damage to both the nerves and the physical components of the ear. This type of loss can also be helped with hearing aids.

## **Damaged Hair Cells**

No, I'm not talking about the cause for baldness in most men! In the inner ear, past the eardrum, then past the three ear bones you may remember from grade school science class (hammer, anvil, and stirrup) and inside the cochlea are tiny nerves. Under a microscope they look like hairs, hence the name 'hair cells'. These hair cells trigger nerve fibers to transmit messages to the brain where they are perceived as sound. When these hairs cells are damaged by loud noises, aging, and other causes it results in sensorineural hearing loss.

The concept of preventive medicine is perhaps most important in hearing. The tiny hair cells are like your adult teeth; once they are gone, they don't grow back. It is easy to prevent hearing loss, but restoring it is another matter. The good news is that no matter how poor your current hearing is, you can stop it from getting worse. Wearing hearing aids can save the hearing you have left. Wearing hearing protection prevents further damage to your hair cells due to noise.

Prevention and ear protection will be discussed a little further along in this handbook.

## **Overview of Hearing Aids**

One of the most common complaints from people who wear hearing aids is background noise. The more background noise present, the harder it will be to hear the person you are speaking with.

You must understand that most of what we hear on a daily basis is in the speech frequency range. Hearing aids are designed to do one thing: make you understand speech better. One of the ways hearing aids do this is by filtering out background noise. In quiet situations, most hearing aid wearers can expect near normal hearing. The better the hearing aid, the better you can expect to hear.

**If you are in a restaurant with fifty people talking, how is a hearing aid going to know you want to hear one person in particular and shut everyone else out?**

**The answer: It won't.**

All people speak in the same general frequency range. If you're trying to hear one person while fifty others are talking, it is going to be more difficult for you than if it was perfectly quiet. That is not to say that all hearing aids are alike. There are hearing aids that work better in noise and make the noise less bothersome. On the next page we will explain the types of hearing aids, or more specifically the different technology levels, that do a better job in noisy situations.

Here is another situation that we regularly face...

A client comes into the office and says:

"I don't want a type X hearing aid. My friend had one and it did not work".

Just because a hearing aid works, or doesn't work, for someone else does not mean it will work the same way for you. A good hearing healthcare professional will find the right hearing aid that matches your loss, your lifestyle and your budget.

Be informed before you purchase.

## Hearing Aid Technology Levels

All hearing aids today are digital and they have a wide range of capabilities depending on their level of technology. Price ranges also vary for each technology level.

You can take four hearing aids from any manufacturer and set them side by side:

- An **entry-level** hearing aid: \$1000 - \$1500 each
- A **mid-range** hearing aid: \$1600 - \$2200 each
- A **high-end** hearing aid: \$2300 - \$2800 each
- A **premium** hearing aid: \$2900+ each

To the average person they will look almost, if not exactly, alike. In many cases, the outer casing or shell will look exactly the same. It's what is inside that is important.

The next few pages will give more information about the characteristics of each technology level and how they differ from each other. After this information, you will find a chart that we call our 'Lifestyle Assessment'. It is one of the tools we use to help identify which category of hearing aids would work best for your needs.



### **High-End and Premium Hearing Aids:**

These are the most advanced hearing aids available on the market now. Like all digital aids, they are programmed to your hearing loss and they retain the exact record of the aid's settings and response. They are the best at handling background noise. Many have extra features such as music programs, wireless accessories such as television and cell phone options, and specialized noise programs.

- Advantages:**
- Most advanced technology for processing sound
  - Best fully automatic response based on your environment
  - Best at providing clarity of speech in noisy environments

**Disadvantages:** Highest priced aids

**Price Range:** approx. \$2300 to \$2800 each for high end, \$2900+ for premium

### **Mid-Range Hearing Aids:**

These are good at handling background noise and are a good hearing aid for the money. They provide an excellent mix of amplification and fine-tuning ability. They are often a cost effective solution for someone who needs the extra help in noise.

- Advantages:**
- Good technology for processing sound
  - Fully automatic response based of your environment
  - Better fitting than entry level

**Disadvantages:**

- Cost is higher than entry-level digital
- Do not handle background noise as well as a premium hearing aids

**Price Range:** approx. \$2000 each

## Entry-Level Aids:

They are an improvement over older, analog (non-digital) hearing aids. They are more comfortable in noise and have higher quality receivers with lower distortion levels. In a quiet, one-on-one situation, these aids will perform well. With any extra noise (TV, others talking, car noise, wind, etc.) you will usually experience problems. The loudest sound in the room will dominate what you are trying to hear. It is best to upgrade to a mid-range or premium hearing aid if background noise is a noticeable problem to you.

**Advantages** (when compared to conventional older, non-digital hearing aids):

- Sounds are more balanced
- Hearing level is more comfortable in most situations
- More natural sound
- Better hearing in noisy situations

Disadvantages:

- Fine tuning not as precise as higher levels of technology
- Amplifies everything (not just speech)
- Can still be troublesome in background noise

**Price range:** starting at approx. \$1200 each

## Hearing Aid Selection

We deal with nine different hearing aid companies. The variety of hearing aids available allows us to find the best hearing aid to meet your needs.

Three main things are taken in account when hearing aids are selected: your **hearing loss**, your **lifestyle**, and your **budget**.

All three of these criteria are very important. We want to make sure that you are getting exactly what you need and that you are happy with your selection.

The chart on the next page is our Lifestyle Assessment. It allows us to find out what technology level is best suited to your needs. The next step is determining the style that you would prefer. Hearing aids styles are covered in a few pages.

	Seldom	Occasionally	Often
Certain people seem to mumble.	1	2	3
I find background noise irritating.	1	2	3
I engage in conversations with groups of people at work or in community activities.	1	2	3
Hearing on the telephone is frustrating.	1	2	3
I ask my dinner partner or movie companion what others have said.	1	2	3
I spend time at sporting events or other loud activities where there is a lot of background noise.	1	2	3
I can hear but I just can't make out what people are saying.	1	2	3
The way I hear embarrasses me with strangers.	1	2	3
I attend social gatherings where many people are present.	1	2	3
I have difficulty hearing in either very quiet or very busy places.	1	2	3
I avoid large gatherings where communication is difficult.	1	2	3
I go to the theater or movies.	1	2	3
I ask others to repeat themselves.	1	2	3
Friends and family complain of the TV or radio being too loud.	1	2	3
I drive a motor vehicle.	1	2	3

Total:

**15 – 23 : Entry Level**

Your lifestyle indicates that you would benefit from entry level technology.

**24 – 31 : Mid Level**

Your lifestyle choices have determined that you require mid level technology to fully benefit from hearing aids while in your many different environments.

**32 – 45 : High Level**

Your responses indicate that your active lifestyle calls for high end technology in order for your new hearing devices to adapt to your many different environments and to ensure your full participation in many events.

## **Basic Styles of Hearing Instruments**

(What Do Hearing Aids Look Like?)

There is no single hearing instrument that is suitable for **all** types of hearing loss. The type you need depends on your individual hearing loss, the nature of that loss, and your lifestyle requirements. Separate from the technology level and price is the style of a hearing aid.

### **Behind-the-ear (BTE)**

This style is a small hearing instrument housed in a curved case that fits securely behind the ear. It is attached to a custom earmold by a small, plastic tube. Sound is delivered from the hearing instrument through the earmold and into the ear canal. BTE models will fit the widest range of hearing losses and are often the only style available to someone with severe to profound hearing loss.



### **Receiver-in-the-canal (RIC)**

This style, also called Receiver-in-the-ear (RITE), is a miniature BTE that can be fit without waiting for a custom earmold. The advantages of these models: more comfortable, your own voice sounds more natural, and this style is easy to wear. This style offers a more natural, clear sound because the receiver (aka the speaker) is located in the tip that sits in the ear canal. The sounds enter the ear canal directly without having to travel through any tubing. It is often the style that is easiest to get used to for 1<sup>st</sup> time hearing aid wearers.



**Custom hearing aids** are fit to the individual.

The shape of your ear is different from that of any other person. In fact, the shape of your left ear is different from that of your right! Wearing someone else's custom-mold hearing aids is like wearing someone else's dentures. They just will not fit! If you are going to spend money on custom hearing aids, make sure they fit your ears and your hearing loss properly.

The **Completely-in-the-Canal (CIC)** and the even smaller **Invisible-in-Canal (IIC)** fit deep in the ear canal and are barely noticeable. This style has many cosmetic and acoustic advantages. Cosmetically, they are almost invisible. There is a reduction in feedback (squealing) when you are on the telephone or when someone hugs you. There is better directionality of sound and reduction of wind noise, because it takes advantage of the ear's natural shape and lets the outer ear do what it was meant to do. The disadvantage is that it uses the smallest batteries available, which last approximately 3-5 days. It also provides help to a more limited range of hearing losses.

The **In-the-Canal (ITC)** fits within the canal portion of the ear and is less visible. It is often a good compromise between the ITE and CIC models.

The **Half-shell (HS)** is smaller and less noticeable than the ITE. It's slightly larger than the ITC, which allows for some more features and a larger battery size.

The **In-the-Ear (ITE)** model fits within the outer ear, extending into the ear canal. This model accommodates a wider variety of hearing losses, has a larger battery size than other models, and is more durable.



IIC



CIC



ITC or HS



ITE



## **Noise Induced Hearing Loss**

Hearing impairment is always on the list of “Top 10 Health Conditions of Interest”, according to the publishers of *Health & Healing* magazine. According to the National Institute of Health, one in three people over the age of 60 has hearing loss.

It is easy to understand why so many of us lose our hearing; we live in a sea of noise. The average personal headset or stereo cranks out 95 decibels (dB). Lawnmowers and motorcycles can hit 90 dB, garbage disposals produce 95dB of noise, and a passing jet is 120dB. If you go to a rock concert, be prepared to be assaulted with 130 dB. The decibel level in the stadium after a touchdown by the home team exceeds 135dB.

Noise-induced hearing loss results from a combination of high sound levels and extended periods of exposure to sounds above 85 decibels.

Hearing loss results from exposure to noise above 85 decibels for an 8-hour day. Any sound above 85 decibels is considered to be harmful to the human ear. Of course, these high noise levels are usually intermittent, but even one very loud pop can cause irreparable damage.

Occupational Health and Safety Regulation, section 7.5, requires that employers of noise exposed workers establish and maintain a noise control and hearing conservation program.

## Hearing Protection

A lifetime of noise pollution results in sometimes significant hearing loss. We've mowed dozens of lawns, attended scores of football games, and enjoyed a few rock concerts. What about hunting season? We should think more about protecting our hearing. Too bad we didn't appreciate it years earlier. Let's encourage our kids and grandkids to wear earplugs at concerts, even though they aren't "cool". Keep earplugs on hand and use them as needed. If you find yourself in a situation where you are unexpectedly exposed to loud noise, cover your ears with your hands.

### Custom Ear Protection



We take an impression of your ear canal and the earplugs are custom made to fit the shape of your ear.

This type includes:

- Noise reduction earplugs
- Swim earplugs
- Sleep plugs
- Musician's ear plugs



### Off-The-Shelf Ear Protection

Many of these items can be purchased at one of our clinics or can be ordered for you.

This type includes:

- Ear muffs
- Foam earplugs(with and without cord)
- Non foam earplugs



## Prevention

Prolonged exposure to sounds as low as 70 decibels can result in damage to your hearing. If you can hear a ringing in your ears after participating in a loud event, such as a concert or after mowing a large lawn, permanent damage has already occurred. Wearing earplugs in noisy environments can play an important role in preventing tinnitus. If you are a musician, use loud electrical appliances or work in noisy environments, earplugs are helpful in reducing noise exposure. Also ask your doctor about the potential ototoxicity of the medications you are on. Ototoxic drugs can not only cause hearing loss but can also cause tinnitus. Blood pressure medications, some antibiotics, even daily low-dose aspirin can all be culprits.

## **Tinnitus (Ringing in the Ear)**

As many as 3 million Canadians suffer from tinnitus, or the ability to hear sounds generated by the auditory system. Tinnitus is not a disease. It is the term used for noises or sounds which are heard in one or both ears which do not come from an external source. These noises are often described as a *high-pitched ringing*, but can also be described as a *buzzing, hissing, pulsing, whistling, roaring*, or various other sounds. It can be constant, intermittent, and/or pulsing. Tinnitus, like chronic pain, is subjective.

Many people experience tinnitus, even those with normal hearing. Individuals with normal hearing may be troubled by intrusive, subjective sounds. Conversely, people with hearing loss, even a severe loss, may have no tinnitus at all. However, the most common occurrence of tinnitus can be seen in people with noise-induced hearing loss. The volume of an individual's tinnitus often varies in intensity, depending on factors such as stress, diet, and noise exposure.

If you have ear or head noises, the first step is to consult your family doctor for a diagnosis. It is important to try to find the cause of this noise. Sometimes these sounds are associated with a local problem like impacted earwax. The sounds could also be symptomatic of more serious health concerns such as kidney, thyroid, or nervous system disorders.

Tinnitus, in its more serious form, is a type of post-trauma disorder. It may begin weeks, or even months, after an accident, a period of unusual stress, or after any disorder affecting the area of the head and neck.

Other main causes of tinnitus are: earwax build-up, obstructions in the outer ear canal, perforated eardrum, fluid accumulation behind the eardrum, chronic ear infections, or trauma to the head or neck. Certain medications, irregular blood pressure, and low serotonin levels can be a cause. Tinnitus is also often associated with noise-induced hearing loss.

It's really no wonder that promoting healthy circulation in and around the ear has been shown to help people find peace and quiet. Maintain healthy circulation in and around your ears. The inner ear contains thousands of sensory cells that need a constant supply of water, oxygen and nutrients. Protect the delicate cells of your inner ear. Prevent nutrient-deficiencies in the sensory cells of the inner ear. Protect your body from the long term effects of stress.

Tinnitus can be initiated by anything that upsets a person's nervous system due to the unique interaction between the brain's instinctual responses and hearing. Improving the state of the nervous system can reduce the intensity of tinnitus and its discomfort. Stress, whether it is gradual or all of a sudden, can set off that ringing, buzzing or whistling.

Since the purpose of treatment is to restore the nervous system to a normal state, it stands to reason that nerve stimulants, like caffeine, are not helpful. People suffering from tinnitus are advised to avoid stimulants, nervous tension, and fatigue. Following a low-sodium diet, which maintains better circulation, and trying to live a low-stress lifestyle can also help. Some people have found relief through relaxation techniques or acupuncture.

Many hearing aid companies sell wearable tinnitus maskers. They have had limited success. If the person suffering from tinnitus also has hearing loss, wearing hearing aids can raise the volume of ambient noise, thereby masking the tinnitus. Ask your hearing healthcare professional how your hearing aid can be adjusted to help with your tinnitus.

## **Some Tips to Improve Communication**

People with hearing problems, even in one ear, will find noisy situations even more of a challenge. Using some of the ideas listed below may help.

- **Get the attention of the person you want to speak to.**

Before speaking, call the person's name or tap them gently, or use some other means of getting their attention.

- **Speak clearly and in a normal voice.**

Say your words clearly. Don't mumble. Speak at a normal speed. It is important to change the tone and volume of your voice. You must be careful not to speak too quietly or too loudly. Often raising your voice too much is too loud for someone hearing impaired as well.

- **Do not change the subject quickly.**

Make sure the person you are speaking to knows that you are now talking about a new subject.

- **Face the person you are speaking to.**

People who have hearing problems may rely on lip-reading. Make sure your face can be seen and is well-lit to allow others to lip-read more easily.

- **Use Better Positioning**

Sit or place yourself so that the person's better ear (or hearing aid) is towards you, or towards other important sounds. Cut down the space between people who are speaking.

- **Cut Down Background Noise**

When speaking, turn off the TV, radio, stereo, running water, etc. Background noise can make speech difficult to understand. Eliminate this noise, or at least minimize it, where possible.

- **Ask If You Are Being Understood**

Ask, in a nice way, if you are being understood. Use different wording to repeat something that has not been understood.

- **Be Patient**

Many people get tired from trying to listen. Don't always expect perfection. Be patient. The purpose of communication is to communicate.

## **Binaural Hearing: Hearing with Both Ears**

Binaural hearing is hearing with both ears. If you have hearing loss in each ear, you should have a hearing aid for each ear. Hearing with one ear is like trying to see with one eye. You don't get the whole picture. After all, hearing does not occur in your ears but in your brain. Your brain needs reliable input from both ears to receive complete information. If your hearing test indicates that you need two hearing aids and you wear just one, you are reducing your brain's ability to hear and understand. You also remove your ability to perceive depth and space. Here are advantages to wearing two hearing aids:

- Less power is needed.

When you have two hearing aids, less power is required by each individual hearing aid. This allows for a much more comfortable listening environment. Loud sounds are more comfortable and listening is less stressful.

- Hearing equally with both ears provides depth perception.

Your brain has the ability to hear in stereo (like a good pair of speakers) but can only do so if sound is delivered by both ears. Receiving information from both ears produces more natural sounds which are understood more clearly. Hearing with two hearing aids ensures better sound quality.

- Localization of sound is achieved.

This means that hearing with both ears gives you the ability to know sound direction. You can determine where a sound is coming from. A person with hearing loss in both ears who wears only one hearing aid will constantly be wondering where a sound came from.

- You won't miss anything on your unaided side.

It can often be perceived as rudeness when you don't answer a person who is talking to you on your unaided side. They don't know that you can't hear them and are not intentionally ignoring them. This can cause difficulties in a meeting, at the dinner table, or if a friend is trying to get your attention in church. When you wear only one hearing aid, you will be turning your head constantly to try and hear on your 'bad' side.

- Two ears hear better in noise.

The most common complaint from people who have hearing loss is how difficult it is to hear in noise. Someone with one hearing aid hears all the sounds blended together. They hear speech combined with background noise of chatter, music, dishes... Hearing speech in noise is difficult enough with two hearing aids. It is near impossible with just one. Having two hearing aids gives the best advantage for hearing in noise.

- Wearing hearing aids can save the hearing you have left.

Providing adequate sound to both ears can prevent your hearing from getting worse. What can start off as similar hearing loss in both ears can change to worse hearing in the ear that does not get a hearing aid. This is a phenomenon called 'auditory deprivation'. It's like the old adage of 'use it or lose it'. Without stimulation, the cells inside your ear can die off and stop working. Give your ears every opportunity to work for you. If you have hearing loss in both ears, you should wear a hearing aid in both ears.

Your ears need all the help you can give them. Ask your specialist if you have further questions about this topic. The different levels of technology available in today's digital hearing aids will also play a role in how well you can hear.

## **Finances and Hearing Aid Coverage**

Hearing aids are expensive. There is no doubt in that. Our goal is to make sure you understand what you are getting for your money. If you cannot afford hearing aids, or the technology level you want is a little out of your budget, there are ways we can help. You can talk to your hearing healthcare professional about payments options as financing is available (OAC). You may also have coverage for hearing aids with your insurance. There is often a maximum eligible amount and frequency limit. Call your insurance to find out what their coverage is.

If you have worked in noise, there are provincial programs available that you may qualify for. If you are a Veteran, you may qualify for hearing aid coverage through Veteran Affairs Canada. We will help you fill out any necessary paperwork.

## **Points of Interest**

- There is **No HST** on hearing aids. You may claim them, as well as batteries, as a medical deduction on your personal income tax return.
- An easy way to keep track of batteries: Remove the tab from the battery and stick it on your calendar that day. You can quickly see how old your batteries are. If you have two hearing aids, change both batteries at the same time.
- It's also noteworthy to mention that a lot of prescription medications are ototoxic, meaning they can cause hearing loss. Blood thinners (blood pressure medications, Aspirin) and many antibiotics fall into this category.
- House calls are available for those who cannot get out.
- We are proud supporters of the Starkey Hearing Foundation. If you have old hearing aids and would like to donate them, we will gladly take them. All makes, models and ages are accepted.
- Make sure you purchase your hearing aids from a licensed specialist, registered with their provincial association. A list can be provided if needed.

## **Extras**

### Silence Is Lonely

When at first our hearing begins to fade;  
Though the signs are foretelling, we may choose to evade.  
We tell others they don't speak clearly, they mumble a lot;  
My concentration is elsewhere, that's why I ask what.  
Please talk a bit louder; your voice is so weak;  
I could hear you OK, if you'd look at me when you speak.  
I can hear you just fine, when you're close at hand;  
If you would learn to enunciate, I could understand.  
Being with family is one of life's greatest joys;  
But, don't expect me to hear, with all of that noise.  
It's easy to blame others, though it's not really fair;  
It's your hearing problem, solve it, and show others you care.  
He who said "silence is golden" spoke for himself only;  
For the hearing impaired, "silence is lonely".

Roy Bain (1996)

## Testimonials

“I did realize I had a hearing loss, but my family noticed first. They were tired of repeating themselves, so I took a visit to **innovative hearing**. They were knowledgeable, friendly, and prompt. I would recommend **innovative hearing** and hearing aids. Mine are inconspicuous, the batteries last a long time and they relieved a lot of stress and tension in my life.”

William Curtis, from NB

“I started noticing that I could not hear as well as I used to. My family was beginning to take notice as well. I’ve been wearing hearing aids for years, but just purchased my most recent pair in January. I knew that technology had advanced so much. I wanted to try the newer technology in order to hear well. The staff at **innovative** were as helpful as always. I am now hearing better and am less bothered by background noise. Depending on the age of hearing aids, there could be room for improvement. If using older aids check it out. There is a trial period.”

Patricia Lucas-Golden, from NB

“I am so please that I got a second hearing aid. I love the better technology and the 2<sup>nd</sup> aid. My left ear has been dormant for many years, it has now awoken. The specialist is a very nice person and a lot of fun. The excellent service keeps me coming back!”

Bernice Laking, from NB

“I have been wearing hearing aids since 1984, I have macular degeneration and rely more on my hearing than ever before. I can’t read anymore, but I need to be able to communicate. I continue to come to **innovative hearing** because the specialist and I are both witty and we get along very well. I guess you are never too old to buy hearing aids.”

Jean Snow, from NB

“My new hearing aids have helped me and my family 100%. I have been a client of **innovative hearing solutions** in Moncton for many years now and the service I have always received has been great. I have no complaints at all. The new technology has improved the way I hear and it’s so good to be able to hear accurately again, as my old aids were worn out and I wasn’t doing well with them at all. I have always recommended this office to my friends and family and will continue to do so.”

Frederick Bourgeois, from NB

“I extend my heartfelt thanks and appreciation to **innovative hearing solutions** for enabling me to obtain hearing aids. The expert help and guidance I received was the deciding factor to come back. Thank you one and all.”

Elizabeth Henwood, from NS

“Thank you for the great work you did with my mother. We can’t believe the difference in her hearing aids. Mom’s hearing is so much better. We can’t believe how much better she hears. She had these hearing aids for years. This is the first time she can hear with them. It is such a pleasure to be able to talk to her easily. The whole family thanks you.”

Stewart Foster (on behalf of the Foster family), from NB

“Mom put her hearing aids in at the office and didn’t take them out until she went to bed. Mom had a wonderful time. She went to prayer group and waited until the end to testify, saying that she heard everything everyone had said. She is so excited and hasn’t stopped smiling. In fact, I think she may be smiling in her sleep.”

WJ, from NB

“Excellent improvement at home (wife, tv). Overall hearing is much better.”

Arnold Hickey, from NB

“I have been wearing my new hearing aids for a month; what a pleasure to be able to hear birds singing, doorbells ringing and the sound signals in my car.”

Gaynelle P Hawkins, from NB

“I just wanted to let you know that I am very pleased with my hearing aid. I greatly appreciated your excellent customer services, whenever I have some difficulties with the hearing volume. You see, I am a senior citizen living alone. My hearing is very important to me, especially when dealing on the telephone or listening to the radio or television. Since my accident and fall last January, my hearing has been worse. Furthermore I have hardware in my arm and elbow which makes me limited in doing all my chores. It is indeed gratifying to know that you are involved in the community. I will be happy to donate some non-perishable food for the food bank, whenever possible. I want to wish you all a very happy and successful new year.

Sincerely,”

Marie Anita Duguay, from NB

“My hearing degenerated slowly and I didn’t recognize it. I realized later that I was missing out but didn’t want the stigma of wearing hearing aids. My health and needs needed addressing. I decided to try and see what they could do. They surpassed my expectations. Glad I picked my health and hearing over my vanity. I didn’t realize I couldn’t hear until I began to hear again!”

Greg Grant, from NB

“This has been a positive experience for me to have them, get them. It has increased my ability to converse with people. Increased my confidence. My husband also is a firm believer of my hearing aids. Mine have never been in my dresser drawer. They are like second nature now. I am even talking with Paul McCartney on the beach in Florida.”

Joan Lunn, from NB

"I used to wear one and then decided to try 2. Two makes a big difference as I can hear a lot better. I am doing really well in church. Even if I am in a crowd, I can hear really well. I had no difficulty getting used to hearing aids. I wear them every day and would recommend them to people. Very pleased with the service here."

Melodia Ward, from NB

"Having 2 hearing aids makes a big difference. I used to only wear one. The thing to do if you have a hearing loss as they are a wonderful help. I can hear my grandchildren. They are very easy to take care of. I am very pleased with the service here."

Helen Mackay, from NB

"Give it a try. It takes a while to get used to them but after the adjustment period I found they improve life. Worth the investment. Especially in small groups. I had such trouble before. Even in meetings a tremendous improvement. Behind the ear model are very good for the phone and comfortable."

Vera Brawn, from NB

"Excellent service here. Anytime I need help I get an appointment quickly. At first I took them in and out now I leave them in all day. Helps with communication. I started with one but when I got 2 I began to hear much better still."

Leona Hayes, from NB

"Hearing Aids from the start helped a lot. They reduce stress and my wife doesn't need to speak loudly any more. The service here has been excellent."

Armand Sharpe, from NB

"I can really tell when I am wearing them and when I am not. They are not like they used to be, they are compact and comfortable now. My husband notices when I am not wearing them as the TV is too loud. I really like them! Amazing difference without them."

Letitia O'Donnell, from NB

"I can hear conversations better. My family notices a difference if I am not wearing them. You don't realize what you've been missing until you wear them. I have more confidence. They are comfortable. I would recommend hearing aids to anybody with hearing loss or hearing difficulties."

Evelyn M, from NB

"I can hear everything plainly now. I can hear the TV much better now. My family does not have to holler anymore. I can understand people rather than guessing. They are very comfortable and pleased with **Innovative Hearing** service."

Harold Joyce, from NB

“On the bike path I started to hear the “Birds” never thought there was any. Comfortable, hardly know I am wearing them. TV- can now hear what they are saying even with background music. Speaking with my family members now no need to repeat.”

David Scott, from NB

“I couldn’t hear a thing if it weren’t for **Innovative Hearing!**”

Patricia Morrison, from NB

“I am a first time user. My family was always saying “get some hearing aids” because I was always asking them to repeat. I was worried how they would look cosmetically but this RIC style, no one even notices them. I put them on in the morning and off at bedtime. My family is pleased and crowds are much better. It’s worth it!”

Donalda Fox, from NB

“I was impressed on my first visit. The staff was upbeat, energetic, enthusiastic, and helpful and ready to meet my every need by making me feel comfortable and important. I would highly recommend the services at **Innovative Hearing** to anyone.”

Ellen Taylor, from NB

“Always ready and willing to assist us in the use of my hearing aids. Is there to listen to any difficulties I am having in hearing loss and or hearing aids. Thanks for always being there with a smile. You have helped me in making the right fit for me.”

Zane Lounsbury, from NB

“I have nothing but good to say about here. Very helpful and courteous. I would definitely recommend this place to others.”

Melvin Crouse, from NB

## **Help us Spread the Word!**

We believe conversation is one of life's greatest pleasures which everyone deserves to be a part of. Hearing loss should not be looked at as a disability but something that requires engaging in the world in a special way. We must find a way to approach the problem differently.

Please tell a friend or loved one just like you about us so that you can help get them back into the conversation and re-connect with their family and friends.

Any person you refer to us will receive:

- FREE hearing screening
- Private Consultation with one of our hearing professionals
- FREE demonstration

This friend or loved one can go to any of our four locations where we will be happy to answer their questions.

1133 Regent Street, Suite 111, Fredericton, NB	(506) 452-2913
271 St. George Street, Moncton, NB	(506) 857-4252
559-561 Main Street, Woodstock, NB	(506) 325-2723
211 South Albion Street, Amherst, NS	(902) 667-5433

## Message from the President



Hearing loss can cause many problems for you personally, problems with friends and family, when you are in a group of people, as well as health and safety issues.

Coming from a family history of hearing loss, with a profoundly deaf younger brother, I know first-hand how difficult it is for everyone involved to have a conversation when one person is hearing impaired. Since 1982, I have devoted my entire professional career to serving the hearing impaired community and their families.

Together, if we can educate enough people, communicate the benefits of hearing aids more clearly and openly discuss our hearing challenges, we would have people who never feel left out or embarrassed again.

What we do at **innovative hearing** is to educate, care for, help and guide our clients through the process of learning to hear again and help as many people as we can. Our mission statement is to continue to serve the hearing impaired community with the utmost passion and create a company with synergy.

Our clinics are friendly, comfortable places and offer clients the very best in both hearing related products and professional expertise. Our customer care staff are well trained and well suited to solving problems and delivering the highest standards of customer service.

~Cheryl Morehouse, President

### New Brunswick

111-1133 Regent Street  
**Fredericton, NB**  
E3B 3Z2  
(506) 452-2913

271 St. George Street  
**Moncton, NB**  
E1C 1W7  
(506) 857-4252

559-561 Main Street  
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E7M 2P2  
(506) 325-2723

### Nova Scotia

211 South Albion Street  
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B4H 2X2  
(902) 667-5433