

Low-Gain Hearing Aids

Questions & Answers

What are low-gain hearing aids?

Low-gain hearing aids are programmed to provide just a small amount of amplification, or “boost”, to sounds around you.

Who can benefit from low-gain hearing aids?

Low-gain hearing aids are intended for people with little or no hearing loss. They can improve your awareness of sounds around you and may help with tinnitus. They may also help you to understand speech in some settings, especially when used with sound streaming options and accessories.

Is there a difference between hearing aids from an audiologist and over-the-counter models?

The main difference is that hearing aids from an audiologist are fit for your specific hearing profile and needs. In contrast, over-the-counter models are designed for the “average” consumer.

How often do hearing aids need to be adjusted?

Once you and your audiologist are happy with the fit, your hearing aids only need to be adjusted when your hearing changes. Yearly hearing checks are recommended.

Who should I contact with questions or for changes to my hearing aids?

Contact the clinic where you received your hearing aids. They may answer your questions remotely or help you schedule an in-person visit.

I work in a secure location. Can I wear hearing aids in this setting?

Department of Defense audiologists will talk with you about wireless security and information awareness during your hearing aid exam and selection.



Can you spot the hearing aid?

Modern BTE hearing aids are nearly invisible when placed on the ear.
Photo courtesy of Oticon, Denmark



Low-gain hearing aids are most often behind-the-ear (BTE) models.
“Photo: Music to my ears” by Keith Williamson is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

Should I wear low-gain hearing aids all the time, or only in certain situations?

Your audiologist will likely recommend that you wear your hearing aids as much as possible, especially if you have hearing loss.

Will I need to wear my hearing aids forever?

Most patients find they need to continue wearing their hearing aids to receive benefit, especially those with hearing loss.

What if I don't want to wear hearing aids? Are there other options?

You may consider the options listed below. How much they help will depend on your lifestyle and what situations you find challenging. These options can also be combined with hearing aids to maximize benefit.

- **Auditory Training Programs.** Like physical therapy for your auditory system, auditory training may help improve your listening skills.
- **Other Training Programs.** Programs that target memory, attention, or other high-level mental processes may help. Training to build lip-reading skills may help speech understanding.
- **Other Rehabilitation Devices.** Some devices may improve your ability to hear and function in some situations. For example, “pocket talkers” and remote microphone systems can help to focus on the sounds that you want to hear. Wearables, smart pens, and phone/computer apps can record and transcribe speech as text in real time.
- **Overall health.** You can improve your hearing health by taking care of your mind and body. Stress, depression, anxiety, and other conditions can affect how your brain hears sound. Other problems such as diabetes, sleep apnea, chronic pain, and cardiovascular issues can also contribute to hearing difficulties.

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