

Has hearing loss become a problem in your life?

Do you frequently ask others to repeat themselves? Do you often complain that other people are “mumbling”? Does your family complain that you play the television too loudly? Do you find that it is necessary for you to watch the speaker’s face closely to follow the conversation? If you answered “yes” to any of these questions, hearing loss may be a problem in your life.

How common is hearing loss?

Hearing loss is one of the most common impairments that people face. As many as 34 million Americans experience hearing loss. This loss usually occurs gradually with aging and can begin to interfere with communication as early as our 30’s. In today’s society with high levels of noise exposure, younger adults and children often experience hearing loss as well. Research has shown that hearing loss can negatively impact your quality of life. Left untreated, this condition can lead to feelings of isolation, depression and can affect your safety and independence. The good news is that many options exist that can help restore your hearing to a level where life can be more enjoyable again!

What are hearing aids?

Hearing aids are electronic devices that can help overcome hearing loss by strengthening and filtering the sound signal that is sent to the brain. With hearing aids, speech can be made clearer. Environmental sounds can be easier to hear. Other people will find it easier to talk to you.

Today’s hearing aids can be virtually invisible, lightweight and come in a variety of styles and sizes. At Head and Neck Surgical Associates, we offer the most technologically advanced digital hearing aids and a variety of accessories designed to meet your budget. Our Doctors of Audiology are here to guide you through the levels of technology and the options available to you. We want you to make the most informed decision about which hearing aid will meet your individual needs.

Why should I see a Doctor of Audiology for my hearing aids?

An audiologist is a professional who specializes in evaluating, diagnosing and treating people with hearing loss and balance disorders. In contrast to a hearing aid dispenser, an audiologist has a graduate degree, has completed a clinical internship, has passed a national standardized exam and has professional credentials.

Some of the services that audiologists are trained to perform include:

- Hearing evaluation for patients of all ages
- Selecting, fitting and dispensing of hearing aids
- Patient and family counseling about living with hearing loss
- Hearing conservation program to prevent hearing loss
- Advanced hearing testing based on patient need, including evaluation for implantable hearing devices (cochlear implant, Baha)

Audiologists understand that a hearing aid may be only part of your hearing loss solution, and they work closely with our board certified Ear, Nose and Throat doctors. A hearing aid should be one component of a program of aural rehabilitation that includes complete testing, medical clearance, careful counseling, instruction, and follow up care.

At Head and Neck Surgical Associates, we are pleased to have two highly qualified audiologists. Pam Bender, AUD, CCC-A and Karen LaValley, AUD, CCC-A are both Doctors of Audiology. They have spent years of training so that they can best guide you to a solution that best fits your needs. Additionally, the physicians at Head and Neck Surgical Associates are dedicated to ensuring that all medical and surgical causes of hearing loss have been evaluated before recommending amplification with hearing aids.

Our Hearing Aid Policy

Our goal is to make the hearing aid process as smooth as possible for you and your family. During your initial hearing aid consultation, you will not be charged to visit with our Doctors of Audiology. It is during this visit that the audiologist will review the styles and prices of different hearing aids. Before the hearing aid evaluation, our policy is that hearing aid clearance be given by an otolaryngologist. If you are a current patient at Head and Neck Surgical Associates, and more than 6 months have passed since your last hearing test, more testing and/or evaluation by your doctor may be needed before hearing aid clearance is given.

Once a hearing aid is chosen, any insurance benefits will be applied to your account. At Head and Neck Surgical Associates, we are pleased to file any insurance that may help with your hearing aid purchase. Please remember that many insurance policies (including Medicare) do not cover hearing aids. Also, we currently do not dispense hearing aids through the Medicare program. Financing options are available for hearing aids, and this can be discussed with our billing office. All hearing aids have a 30 day trial period during which an aid can be returned. If a hearing aid is returned, a fee of \$150 will be charged.