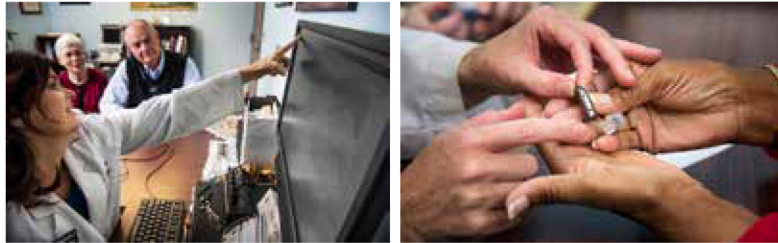


KEYS TO SUCCESS WITH HEARING AIDS

By **UNC Greensboro Speech and Hearing Center**



Once you have made the decision to give hearing aids a try, you might ask yourself questions like, *What do I really need?*, *What can I expect?*, and *How much do I have to spend?* Although the good news is that there are more options than ever before, it can be confusing when trying to make the “right” choice. Audiologists are doctoral-level professionals who are state-licensed and nationally-certified and specialize in hearing loss. We can help you navigate the hearing aid selection process, expertly fit the instrument, and provide guidance and support during the adjustment period.

Hearing aids have come a long way—from body worn hearing aids adjusted with screw drivers to ear-level hearing aids that can be programmed using a computer. They also offer better performance and durability as well as optional features such as rechargeability, Bluetooth connectivity, tinnitus management, and listening. *Hearing Aid Selection* hinges on both your wants and needs. You may need a hearing aid to work harder in background noise depending on the severity of your hearing loss. You may want a hearing aid that adjusts automatically and streams to your smartphone for convenience and ease of listening. For many, the cost of hearing instruments also is an important factor in hearing aid selection. Personal Sound Amplification Products (PSAPs) and Over the Counter (OTC) hearing aids have been approved by the FDA to be sold in stores, magazines, online, and by phone. Although these devices may seem to be affordable options, they could be too weak or too strong for your hearing loss because they are not fit to your hearing prescription. In addition, the cost of these devices does not include the services of the audiologist who can validate your selection.

During the *Hearing Aid Fitting*, the audiologist will program the hearing aid based on your recent hearing evaluation. The computer software prescribes amplification based on your unique hearing profile. The audiologist then makes adjustments based on your preferences while taking into account audibility of speech and other sounds you want to hear. Subjective and objective verification of hearing aid performance is essential to ensure adequate benefit. The audiologist also will orient you to the devices including care and maintenance to ensure longevity of the devices.

The *Adjustment Period* is a frequently overlooked step in ensuring hearing aid success. Too often, hearing aids end up in a drawer because essential follow up was not provided. The process of adjusting to new hearing aids takes time and should not be rushed. Optimum benefit will be achieved when proper attention is given by the audiologist to address any concerns and provide encouragement.

At the UNC Greensboro Speech and Hearing Center, we believe the Patient-Audiologist relationship is essential to hearing aid success. Using a patient-centered approach, our audiologists are here to answer your questions and walk beside you during your hearing loss journey. If you have questions about finding hearing technology that may be right for you, please contact us at **(336) 334-5939** or visit us online at <http://csd.uncg.edu/shc> or www.facebook.com/uncgaudiology. *We look forward to hearing from you!*