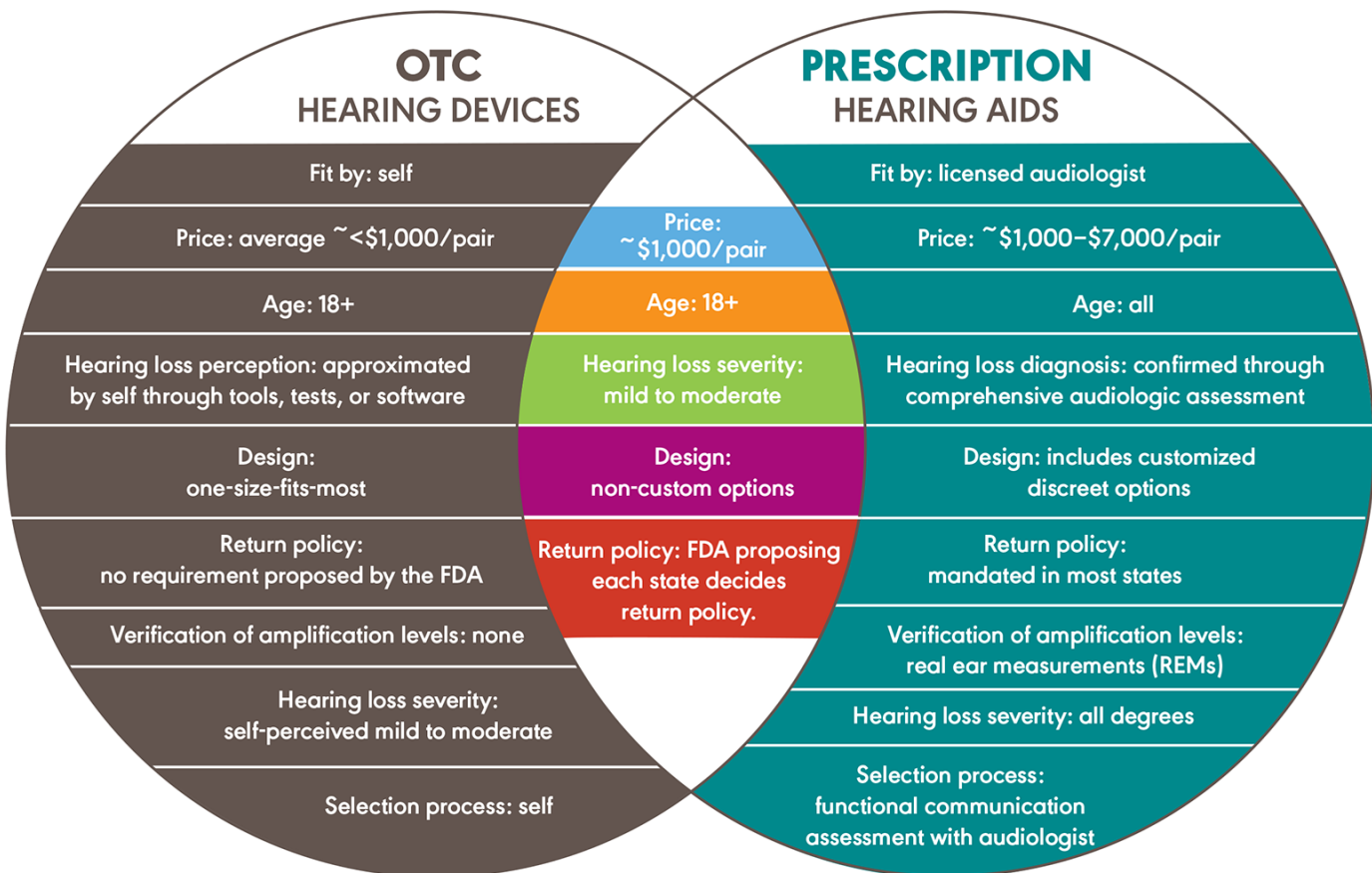




The Hearing Herald

17th Edition
October 2022

FAQs about OTCs? We've got answers!



*Information on this diagram is based on the FDA proposed over-the-counter (OTC) hearing aid regulations posted in October 2021. As new information is released, ASHA Audiology Practices will update the chart accordingly. Updated 4/5/2022

The August 2022 FDA ruling that **Over-the Counter (OTC) hearing aids** may be sold directly to consumers is intended to make hearing aids more accessible and affordable. However, OTCs are not appropriate for all patients and have inherent limitations as summarized in the graphic prepared by the American Speech-Language Hearing Association (ASHA). Notably, there is overlap between OTCs and **Prescription-based hearing aids** where eligible consumers can find some middle ground. UNCG Speech and Hearing Center offers prescription-based hearing aids that are OTC equivalents. These devices are similar in **PRICE** to OTCs without sacrificing benefits such as **VERIFICATION** to ensure device benefit and safety. Consumers also can **RETURN** devices if not satisfied during a specified adjustment period. UNCG audiologists are prepared to answer your questions about OTCs. **We are here to help!** <https://www.fda.gov/medical-devices/consumer-products/hearing-aids>

Contact us at (336) 334-5939 to schedule a **hearing aid consultation** at no charge. Also, a friendly reminder to have your current hearing devices cleaned and checked every 3-6 months. Schedule a **"Fall Tune-up"** today to ensure your devices are ready for the upcoming holiday season!



Did you know you *Listen* with your *Brain*?



Your ears send messages to your brain, which processes sound and assigns meaning to what you hear. While hearing is a passive process, listening requires your active participation. The good news is that patients **with and without hearing aids** can improve their listening skills. **Amptify** is a **digital therapeutic (DTx)** that offers auditory training designed to target specific skills such as listening in noise, a common complaint of people with hearing loss, as well as auditory memory, discrimination, and processing speed. These auditory skills can be developed by engaging in Amptify's clinically proven DTx curriculum that includes interactive programs and science-backed listening games that can be played on your phone, tablet, or computer. Importantly, new and existing hearing aid users can benefit from listening practice offered by Amptify. While hearing aids help you hear better, Amptify strengthens your brain's ability to listen so you can make better use of what you hear. Visit <https://amptify.com/> to learn more about the program. To sign up for a two-week trial of Amptify, ask your audiologist to send you an invitation by email. By joining **UNCG's portal**, your audiologist can monitor your usage and progress as part of a comprehensive aural rehabilitation plan. Call **(336) 334-5939** or email hearing@uncg.edu for more information about what to expect with Amptify.

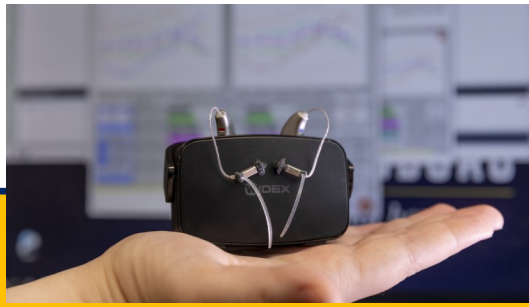
Meet our Doctor of Audiology (Au.D.) Interns



Sarah Gallagher is from Willow Grove, PA and attends Salus University in Elkins Park, PA. Her areas of interest are comprehensive evaluations for all ages and auditory processing disorders, but she enjoys learning about all areas of audiology. In her free time, Sarah likes reading, being outside and spending time with friends and family.



Emily Ross is from Rhode Island, but currently attends school at Nova Southeastern University in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Her areas of interest include diagnostic testing, vestibular testing, and working with all populations. In her free time, Emily enjoys reading, hiking, and hanging out with dogs. She is very excited to be finishing her doctoral program in Greensboro!



Top 7 Ways Hearing Aids Can Improve Quality of Life

In the April 2022 edition of the *Hearing Herald*, **hearing** was identified as one of **six factors for health aging** identified by the World Health Organization (WHO). In her blog, Dr. Amy Sarow (audiologist) lists the top 7 ways hearing aids can improve your quality of life.

1. **Improves communication abilities.** Hearing loss makes it difficult to communicate with others. Hearing aids can help you hear more clearly, which will improve your communication skills and allow you to participate in activities that you may have been avoiding.
2. **Promotes safety.** Untreated hearing loss can put your safety at risk, as it can make it difficult to hear things like sirens, approaching vehicles, or warning alarms. Hearing aids can alert you of environmental changes to help keep you safe.
3. **Improves health outcomes.** According to a recent study, those with untreated hearing loss will have an additional \$22,434 in healthcare costs over ten years than patients with normal hearing.¹ Investing in hearing aids could actually save you money in the long term.
4. **Preserves memory.** A recent study has shown that hearing loss is linked to an increased risk of dementia.² The study found that those with hearing loss were 24% more likely to develop dementia over a period of six years than those without hearing loss.³ One theory regarding this relationship is that hearing loss causes changes in the brain which lead to dementia.⁴ Wearing hearing aids regularly can help make information much easier to understand, which can facilitate better neural encoding for improved memory function.
5. **Promotes social engagement.** Those with hearing loss may find themselves withdrawing from social activities, as it becomes more and more difficult to communicate. This can lead to isolation and depression.⁵ Additionally, hearing loss can cause problems at work, as it becomes difficult to hear important instructions or colleagues. Wearing hearing aids help to preserve social connections and reduce feelings of isolation.
6. **Reduces risk of falls.** A John Hopkins study found that those with hearing loss were three times more likely to fall than those without hearing loss.⁶ The study found that hearing loss caused problems with balance and environmental awareness, both of which can lead to falls. For seniors, falls are the number one cause of death or injury.⁷ Treating hearing loss can lead to a longer, healthier life.
7. **Supports mental health.** Research shows that untreated hearing loss can lead to anxiety, depression, and sleep problems.⁸ One study found that those with sensorineural hearing loss were more likely to experience clinical depression and anxiety than those without hearing loss.⁹ Treating hearing loss can reduce effects on mental health and in so doing, even have an impact on sleep quality.

(references provided upon request).



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Now Offering Cochlear Implants!



UNCG Audiologists are excited to offer **cochlear implant services** at the Speech and Hearing Center. A cochlear implant (CI) is a surgically implanted device for people with moderate-to-profound sensorineural hearing loss. CI testing, mapping, programming, and troubleshooting are available. If you or someone you know has questions about CI candidacy or needs assistance with a CI, contact us at **(336) 334-5939**. Also, check our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/uncgaudiology) for information about upcoming educational seminars on cochlear implants and other hearing-related topics.

UNCG Audiologists continue to offer comprehensive evaluation and management of hearing loss, tinnitus, sound sensitivity, and other specialty services to meet a variety of listening needs.

October is National Audiology Awareness Month!

Spread awareness by sharing this newsletter with someone you care about.
One small act can make a HUGE difference! (visit www.HowsYourHearing.org)