

HEARING INSTRUMENTS AND YOU

HEARING AID AWARENESS WEEK
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Information provided by the **International Hearing Society** - www.ihinfo.org

Enhance Your Life

Hearing instruments are hi-tech marvels. They come in a wide variety of styles from the compact miniature sizes that fit in the ear canal to the larger body style aids. Other styles fit into the outer portion of the ear, still others are worn behind the ear. Newest on the scene are disposable hearing aids.

Hearing aids have gone beyond amplification only. New technology has made it possible for some hearing aids to screen out unwanted background noises, amplify only specific frequencies or mask noises generated in the ear itself.

Hearing instruments are a sound investment! You'll hear better and enjoy the sounds of life once again. The advanced technology of the hearing aid combined with the expertise and personal care of the Hearing Instrument Specialist® provide the means by which the hearing impaired can join the ranks of the hearing prepared.

Selecting a Hearing Instrument

Before purchasing a hearing aid, check to see if you have done the following:

- Consulted with your physician or had your hearing problem evaluated by a medical doctor
- Evaluated the qualifications and services provided by your licensed Hearing Instrument Specialist®
- Carefully read the user instruction brochure and terms of your hearing aid contract
- Made sure the instrument comes with a warranty and that you understand its terms
- Selected a model that fits comfortably, suits your individual needs and operates with ease.

Hearing instruments come in many types, designs and styles. Some provide a variety of special features such as programmability, telephone pick-ups, adjustable tone controls and microprocessors for noise filtration.

Therefore, hearing instrument prices vary greatly, depending on the type of instrument, the number of special features and the services provided by your specialist. The objective is to select hearing instruments that fits your budget and will meet your needs by providing the most effective assistance for your hearing impairment.

Types of Hearing Instruments

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 and the nature of that loss.

The **Completely-In-The-Canal (CIC)** type of hearing aid fits deeply within the ear canal and is barely visible.

The **In-The-Ear (ITE)** model fits within the outer ear, extending into the ear canal.

The **Behind-The-Ear (BTE)** model is small and housed in a curved case that fits securely behind the ear. It is attached to the earmold by a short, plastic tube.

Circuit Design and Capabilities

The technical choices in current hearing aids allow for a variety of options. There are approximately 600 models of circuit designs with digital programming and digital processing capabilities, as well as many non-digital circuit designs. These circuit choices are categorized into seven technologies.

1. **LINEAR** - These make all sounds louder.
2. **TRADITIONAL COMPRESSION** - These soften some loud sounds when they occur.
3. **ADVANCED COMPRESSION** - There are many special circuits to make hearing aids more comfortable. Your specialist will guide you.
4. **ADVANCED DESIGN NON-DIGITAL** - These are unique, newer, more complex circuits that may be "automatic".
5. **DIGITAL PROGRAMMABLE** - These higher technology circuits have 1-13 adjustable bands of compression. They use computers to program different listening environments. Some models use remote controls to provide more control.
6. **100% DIGITAL SIGNAL PROCESSING (DSP)** - Audio sounds are digitized and then processed. These types of hearing aids use computers for the fitting process. Computer chips within the hearing aid are used for further processing.
7. **DEEP CANAL** - For maximum benefit this circuit depends upon the placement of the hearing aid near the eardrum.

Remember your Hearing Instrument Specialist's® role is to correct your hearing problem with the most effective hearing instruments for you. Listen to their advice and discuss your options.
