

## Hearing Technology Today

Hearing loss can make it difficult to communicate in a satisfying way. Fortunately, advances in digital technology can help lower communication barriers by amplifying sounds to make them clearer and to compensate for frequency-range losses. A qualified audiologist can help you choose the best equipment options to fit your specific needs. The range of this technology includes many solutions, such as:

- Hearing Amplifiers
- Amplified Phones
- Assistive Listening Devices
- Alerting Devices
- Cochlear Implants

### Hearing Amplifiers

Hearing amplifiers, or hearing aids, are much more sophisticated than they used to be. Modern hearing aids do not just offer volume control; they can improve your listening experience in a variety of ways. For instance, they can amplify frequencies that are essential to understanding speech, allowing you to hear spoken words much more clearly again. And they can reduce or eliminate unwanted background noise or sound peaks, even enabling you to hear from much greater distances than before.

Hearing aids come in a variety of styles and can be worn in a number of different ways – behind the ear, in the ear, partially in the canal, or completely in the canal. Your audiologist can help you choose the best style for your hearing needs. Of course, a period of adjustment should be expected with any hearing aid, but once you realize how much of a difference it makes, a surprising transformation can often take place. This is especially true when you couple your hearing aid with one or more of the available assisted listening devices on the market.

### Amplified Phones

Imagine a phone that allows you to hear more clearly and never miss a call. If your current phone is not loud enough for you, why not try an amplified phone? Amplified phones are ideal people with moderate-to-severe hearing loss. Amplified phones are just like the phone you use every day, yet with higher volume levels and other features to make your phone more useful. You can easily amplify phone conversations to a comfortable level. Most amplified phones also come with an extra-loud ringer and a flashing indicator to alert you to incoming calls.

### Assistive Listening Devices

Assistive listening devices, used either in conjunction with or independent of hearing aids, are a good option for many people with hearing loss. In addition to improved hearing, some of the added benefits that can result from the correct use of these devices include improved communication, increased self-esteem, and a more positive outlook about your hearing loss.

## Hearing Amplifiers

As mentioned above, an amplified phone may be the answer for you. But you may prefer to simply connect your telephone to your hearing aid. Telephone amplifiers connected to a phone allow people with moderate-to-severe hearing loss to improve their calling experience. Even with a hearing aid, you may have trouble hearing on the phone. Hearing amplifiers allow you to use your hearing aid to make volume and tone adjustments during a phone call. Some telephone amplifiers have flashing lights when the phone is ringing, and adjustable tone and volume controls.

## Infrared Systems

Infrared systems convert sounds into infrared light waves. A transmitter sends the sound to a receiver and, when coupled with a hearing aid, allows you to adjust the loudness on certain televisions and home theaters.

## FM Systems

With an FM system, you can wear a small microphone that sends the sound directly to a receiver in your hearing aid or headset, allowing you to set a comfortable volume level. This is very useful if you attend events, such as public lectures or adult education classes.

## Alerting Devices

Alerting devices are used to signal the presence of sound in the environment, such as a ringing telephone, a doorbell, or a smoke detector. Alerts can be conveyed by a flashing light or loud ringer on the telephone or in the home, or by a vibration that you can feel on a wearable device.

## Cochlear Implants

A cochlear implant is a small, complex electronic device that can provide you with a sense of sound if you have profound hearing loss. The implant consists of an external portion that sits behind the ear and a second portion that is surgically placed under the skin. An implant does not restore normal hearing, but it can give you a useful representation of sounds in the environment, such as speech.

Being well informed and making the right choices for your own hearing ability, whether through your own research or through the guidance of a trained audiologist, is an important step toward hearing more effectively and communicating more easily with the world.