

ASSOCIATED
AUDIOLOGISTS

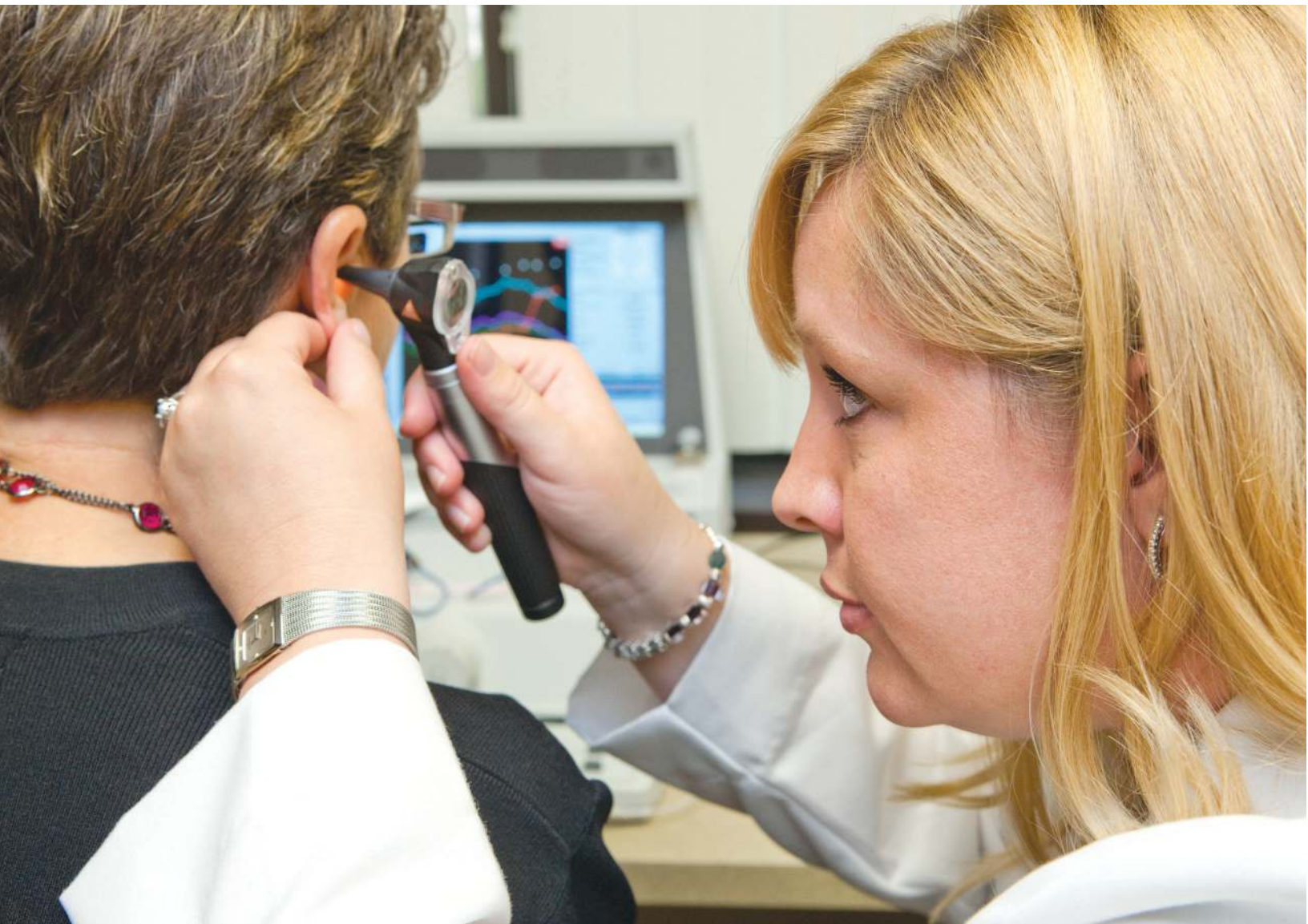
HEAR BETTER WITH TODAY'S HEARING AIDS



Hear Better with Today's Hearing Aids

Hearing aid technology has made significant advancements over the last several decades. Today's hearing aids use digital signal processing to filter sound in new ways that weren't possible with hearing aids only a decade ago. This technology opens the doors to many additional features that don't just help you hear better—they also make your life easier.

In addition to adjusting for different listening situations and being virtually invisible, modern hearing aids offer many features that make them more convenient than ever to use, including alerting you to change the batteries when needed and the option to connect to other devices you use regularly. If you've noticed a hearing loss but have been hesitant to look into hearing aids, continue reading to learn how much they have to offer. They can do more than improve your hearing—they can improve your quality of life.



Why addressing hearing loss early is important

It's important to address a hearing loss as soon as you recognize a problem. It may seem like nothing more than a minor inconvenience, but ignoring a hearing problem can lead to bigger issues and could even impact your overall health and brain function.

Recent research has revealed a connection between hearing loss and health issues—both physical and mental. Hearing loss has been linked to depression, issues with cognition, an increased risk of falling, and even dementia. When the centers of your brain responsible for processing sound are not stimulated, they can become dormant, affecting your neurological function. Furthermore, when you have to devote more mental energy to perceiving and understanding what you're hearing, it diverts resources away from other mental functions.

Hearing problems in children should especially be addressed as soon as possible. If a child is experiencing untreated hearing loss, he or she may fail to develop certain cognitive abilities and may have difficulty with communication and language development. Children with hearing problems may experience social problems as well if they aren't treated.





Advantages of today's hearing aids

Hearing well involves much more than simply increasing the volume. While volume is one aspect of sound, true listening comprehension also requires clarity of sound, the ability to process signals coming from both ears, and even the ability to determine where sounds are coming from. If just one of these elements is compromised, you risk not being able to understand what you are hearing.

Older style hearing aids were limited in both their ability to be tailored to your specific hearing loss and with what they were able to do with incoming sounds. Today's hearing aids are much more flexible, may be precisely programmed for your specific hearing loss, and offer more advanced features to truly enhance your listening experience in a variety of environments. Working with a doctoral-level audiologist will allow you to identify the features and benefits to best address your individual listening needs and fit within your budget.

If you think more technological features will make hearing aids harder to use, don't worry! Your audiologist is the one doing all of the work, configuring your hearing aids to meet your needs. And, you can easily integrate your hearing aids with the devices you are already comfortable using—including smartphones and TVs.

Why you should see an audiologist

Besides custom fitting your hearing aid and helping you identify the features needed to address your individual needs, an audiologist will verify that your hearing aids are working the way they should. This verification process evaluates the ability of the hearing aid to meet your goals (more on these on the following pages). Any time you have a change in hearing or have to make changes to your hearing aid, a doctoral-level audiologist should evaluate and adjust your device accordingly.





Ask yourself the right questions to identify the right features

With all of the new features available on today's hearing aids, how do you know if any of that technology is right for you? The best way to find out is to talk to a doctoral-level audiologist about your listening needs. Hearing aids are not a one-size-fits-all solution. The best hearing aid for you depends on a number of factors.

Consider what's most important to you when it comes to your hearing. Who do you want to hear? In what situations do you spend most of your time? Which of the following scenarios applies to you?

- ▶ You regularly have to ask family members to speak up, and they get tired of repeating themselves.
- ▶ You often interact with children and have trouble understanding or communicating with them.
- ▶ You spend a lot of time in environments with a lot of background noise, such as crowded stores or restaurants, and you want to restore your ability to pinpoint who is saying what and from what direction.
- ▶ You frequently find yourself in situations where you are at a distance away from the speaker, such as church, meetings, or lectures.
- ▶ You've started to notice that while you're driving, it's becoming more difficult to tell which direction traffic sounds are coming from.
- ▶ You have trouble hearing your TV or cell phone.

*NO MATTER WHAT YOUR GOALS ARE,
TALKING TO A DOCTORAL-LEVEL AUDIOLOGIST
IS THE BEST WAY TO DISCOVER THE TYPE
OF HEARING AID THAT WILL BEST HELP YOU.*

Basic hearing aid features

No matter which type of hearing aid you choose, you should expect the following features from any device.

- ▶ **Comfort** – Modern hearing aids are well constructed and comfortable to wear. As technology advances, devices continue to grow smaller and are barely noticeable.
Your audiologist may take a mold of your ear, so your hearing aid should closely match your ear shape and size. Although they may feel a little strange at first, hearing aids should never be uncomfortable. Wearing a hearing aid is similar to getting used to wearing a watch: after a while, you don't even recognize that it's there.
- ▶ **Appearance** – Many people are concerned with how their hearing aids will look. New hearing aid users in particular are often afraid of looking older than they actually are. Fortunately, the technology offered by modern hearing aids allows them to be smaller and very well hidden. The size of your hearing aid will depend somewhat on your level of hearing loss and the additional features you select, but they are all generally small and discreet. In fact, people are often surprised by the amount of technology packed into these tiny devices!



- ▶ **Battery life** – Many people are concerned about hearing aid battery life, especially as new technology becomes available. Fortunately, modern hearing aids are typically very efficient, and battery life is usually comparable to older processors. Note that some features—such as Bluetooth streaming—may result in a higher battery drain, but not enough to result in a major inconvenience. Manufacturers take special interest in ensuring that the advancements they make in hearing aids are not overshadowed by a heavy impact on battery life. Hearing aids with rechargeable batteries also are now available.
- ▶ **Water resistance** – A feature that some people may not consider, but is critical to a hearing aid's function, is water resistance. While most hearing aids aren't waterproof, they should have a high rating for moisture and dust resistance. Sweat, ear wax, oils from your hair and skin, and humidity in the air are all factors that can inhibit the performance of your hearing aids. If you work outdoors or spend a lot of time in the water, be sure to ask about water-resistant devices or drying accessories.

Knowing that every hearing aid has a standard level of dependability relative to these features is reassuring to users who find it challenging to select the best hearing aid for their needs.

WHEN LOOKING AT MORE ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY, YOU CAN SELECT FEATURES THAT BEST SUIT YOUR INDIVIDUAL GOALS WITHOUT WORRYING ABOUT SACRIFICING BASIC COMFORT AND PERFORMANCE.



Advanced hearing aid technology

When it comes to more advanced capabilities, your doctoral-level audiologist will work with you to select the features that address your needs and budget. Keep in mind that technology is constantly changing, and even with proper maintenance, most hearing aids will last four to six years. Many hearing aid accessories can also be added at a later time. So choose functionality that addresses your current needs—you can always adjust your technology as your situation changes.

One of the best things about hearing aid technology is its ability to connect to the devices you are already using on a daily basis. Take a look at some of these options available today:

- ▶ **Bluetooth streaming** – Bluetooth is the standard short-range wireless connection used by cell phones, televisions, computers, and other electronics. When you have Bluetooth capability in your hearing aids, you can connect them to other Bluetooth-capable devices.

For example, you can wirelessly connect your cell phone to your hearing aids, so you'll be able to hear clearly and remain hands-free for other activities, such as driving. You can also use Bluetooth technology to connect your hearing aids directly to your television, so you can hear your favorite show without disturbing your family members.

- ▶ **Direct Audio Input** – Similar to Bluetooth, this system allows users to connect their hearing aids to another device. However, instead of connecting wirelessly, direct audio input works with a wire that directly connects the device's headphone jack to your hearing aids. This is beneficial for connecting to devices that don't have Bluetooth capability.

Take note that direct audio input is only available for behind-the-ear hearing aids because these devices are external and large enough to house a plug-in port. In-the-ear, invisible-in-canal, and completely-in-the-canal hearing aids are usually too small and hidden in the ear to allow for such a feature.

- ▶ **Telecoil** – This tiny copper coil is available in most hearing aids. These small devices allow you to talk on compatible phones—including most cell phones—without hearing any whistling, ringing, or feedback noise.

A telecoil can also function as a wireless antenna that links to a sound system. Some public places, such as classrooms, theaters, and worship centers, are equipped with hearing assistive technology that you can access with a telecoil in order to improve your understanding of dialogue.

- ▶ **Smartphone apps** – Many cell phone users use apps on a daily basis for some form of information, entertainment, health tracking, and other functions. With some types of hearing aids, you'll have the option of controlling them remotely with an app, allowing you to adjust the settings right from your phone.



All of this technology makes your listening journey a lot more simple and convenient, but the best is yet to come! One day, hearing aids may all be connectable to a smartwatch. We may see an integration between hearing aids and personal computers. Or we may have access to features we can't even yet imagine!

Whether you're deciding on your first pair of hearing aids or upgrading to more advanced devices, the possibilities are nearly endless. Many of our patients tell us they wish they hadn't waited so long to start using hearing aids. You don't have to miss out on life any longer. With today's powerful, comfortable, and inconspicuous hearing aid options, you can clearly hear your family members, church services, and favorite TV shows, no matter what sort of environment you find yourself in.

*LET A DOCTORAL-LEVEL AUDIOLOGIST SHOW YOU
EVERYTHING THAT MODERN HEARING AIDS HAVE TO OFFER.
CONTACT ASSOCIATED AUDIOLOGISTS TODAY TO REQUEST AN APPOINTMENT
WITH ONE OF OUR AUDIOLOGISTS WHO CAN HELP YOU HEAR YOUR BEST!*



ABOUT US



Associated Audiologists, Inc., is the region's leader in audiologic care for hearing, tinnitus, and balance disorders. Established in 1985, the practice is independent and locally owned by Timothy C. Steele, Ph.D., president.

Associated Audiologists has grown to include more doctoral-level audiologists than any practice in the area, with six convenient locations to serve you. Our audiologists have allied health staff privileges at Shawnee Mission Medical Center, Saint Luke's South Hospital, Saint Luke's/Cushing Hospital, and Saint Luke's East Hospital.

The Associated Audiologists team features professionals who use advanced diagnostic and verification technology to diagnose and treat hearing loss. The practice offers digital hearing aid products from the world's most respected manufacturers backed by unparalleled service. We also have experts who specialize in diagnosing and managing tinnitus and sound sensitivity, and dizziness and balance disorders.

Each of our associates is a doctoral-level audiologist. As part of their four-year doctoral training, these audiologists spend a final year completing an externship experience supervised by a licensed audiologist. Our audiologists are members of the Academy of Doctors of Audiology (ADA) and hold certificates of clinical competence in audiology from the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA). Many of our team members are also adjunct professors at the University of Kansas Medical Center.



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