

University of Arizona Comprehensive Hearing Aid and Hearing Loss Management Program

Learning how to adjust to and compensate for a hearing loss can sometimes be confusing and frustrating. Hearing aids are a very important part of this process. They make it possible for you to hear sounds that you would not hear otherwise. However, hearing aids are limited in how well they can solve ALL of your listening challenges, and they may not provide complete resolution of the problem. That's why it is so important to learn as much as possible about your own particular hearing loss and about all of the solutions available to you. At The University of Arizona Hearing Clinic, our Living WELL with Hearing Loss approach considers device selection and follow up as an important part of a more comprehensive program that is tailored for all of the needs related to your hearing loss and lifestyle needs.



What does a Living WELL with Hearing Loss approach mean to me?

From the outset, your audiology team will discuss with you your history, explore the cause of the hearing loss, discuss results and their implications and the best solutions for you. If you decide that you want to follow through with hearing aids in our clinic, then we will have an in-depth discussion with you (we encourage you to include a family member, partner or friend in these discussions) about selection of the right technology. The individual steps in that process are described more fully below. We encourage you and a family member to attend our Living with Hearing Loss classes, and these are also described below.

Description of Hearing Aid Program and Philosophy: In most practices, when you purchase hearing aids, the total cost includes not only the devices but also all of the services associated with them. We take a different approach that allows you to see separately the invoice cost of the hearing aid and the professional fees for all of the related services. Our pricing is comparable to most practices in the community, but we provide you with a complete description of the professional services, as described below.

Comprehensive, evidence-based device selection. There are hundreds of different models of hearing aids and a wide variety of assistive devices from various manufacturers. The market changes rapidly. Our goal is to identify the characteristics of the ideal hearing instruments FOR YOU, based on your hearing loss, various objective tests of your ability to recognize speech in different environments, and your own personal listening demands. Based on this analysis, we select a manufacturer and hearing devices that best meet your needs, and the devices are ordered from the manufacturer individually. We maintain accounts with almost all of the major hearing instrument manufacturers and select from at least five different manufacturers at any given time. We stay informed about the most current hearing aid research and keep this in mind during the discussion and selection process.

Fitting and verification. Once the hearing aids and any other technologies have been received in the clinic, you return for a hearing aid fitting appointment. We assure that the hearing aids fit your ear well physically and that the sound is set properly for your hearing loss and needs. We take a scientific approach to this process using the latest technology to make fine-tuning adjustments based on actual measurements of what you are hearing. This is done by putting a small tube inside your ear canal while the hearing aids are in your ears. There is a substantial body of research that suggests that this approach results in the most accurate and appropriate fit possible. Because of this, we start ALL of our hearing aid fittings with these measurements.

Counseling and instruction. After the hearing aids are adjusted appropriately for your hearing loss, we then counsel you on proper use and maintenance before you leave the clinic.

Extensive follow up during initial adjustment period. A critical part of the process is assuring that the hearing aids are working the best that they can for YOUR life and in the situations that you have determined that you want to improve. During the adjustment phase, we work with you to adjust the hearing aids based on your experience and feedback. Most hearing aids have additional programs that may be added through the software, and discussions about these programs continues after the initial fitting. It is critically important that you are satisfied with the devices before the final purchase is complete. If for any reason the hearing aids that we have selected are not meeting your needs, then we may select different devices, take a different approach or conclude that the fitting of hearing aids should be deferred. Working with and adjusting to hearing aids is a process, not a one-time appointment.

Living Well with Hearing Loss Program. Even the most advanced technologies available in today’s hearing aids cannot always compensate completely for a hearing loss. These educational and support groups provide an excellent opportunity to gain information and to interact with others who are experiencing similar issues.

Topics Include:

- Understanding hearing and hearing loss*
- Interpreting the results of your hearing test (Be sure to bring along your own audiogram)*
- Hearing aids and other devices*
- Strategies for coping with difficult listening situations*
- Principles of speech reading*
- Special topics suggested by the group*

An accompanying person (spouse, partner, family member) is encouraged to attend classes also. These are very successful in helping you to understand your hearing loss and to learn better coping and communication strategies. Read more about the program at: www.lwhl.arizona.edu.

All follow up necessary during the first three years of hearing aid ownership. You will be scheduled for regular follow up appointments every 6-12 months. This is critical to the process. As your brain adapts to hearing with your new hearing aids, adjustments can be made that will actually improve how well you hear with them. There is also routine maintenance of hearing aids that must be done periodically by a professional. During these follow up appointments we can verify that your hearing aids are functioning properly.

Routine hearing aid maintenance and troubleshooting. All hearing devices are prone to repair problems, most commonly related to earwax, sweat, body oils or moisture. We are available to assist you when these problems arise - either by making an appointment or dropping off the hearing aids in the clinic for maintenance. The clinic is open from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 pm Monday through Friday with full closure from Christmas to New Year’s Day. We have walk-in times available on most days from 11:00 a.m to noon. **All of the charges for these repairs and the time from your audiology team are covered for the first three years that you own your hearing aids.**

YOUR COSTS:

Our Professional Fee: These fees are standard and are the same no matter your choice of hearing aid:

	Professional Fee
One Hearing Aid	\$600
Two Hearing Aids	\$1000

Cost of the Hearing Device: You will be charged the manufacturer’s invoice price of the hearing aid, plus an amount to cover shipping and processing. This cost ranges from approximately \$500 to \$2100 per hearing aid, depending on the device selected.