



Now Hear This:

Tips for Better Hearing at Home and in the Community

Do you have trouble hearing while watching television?

Closed Captions

Closed captions are words displayed on the television screen that describe the audio portion of the program. The viewer can read everything that is being said during the programs and commercials. All TVs manufactured after July 1993 that are 13" or larger have a closed caption decoder in them. Simply turn on the captioning by using the remote control. For those who have an older TV, it is usually more economical to purchase a new TV than it is to purchase a closed caption decoder.

Advantages

- Closed caption decoders are in most TVs so there is no additional cost.
- It is easy to use because there are no headsets or battery packs.



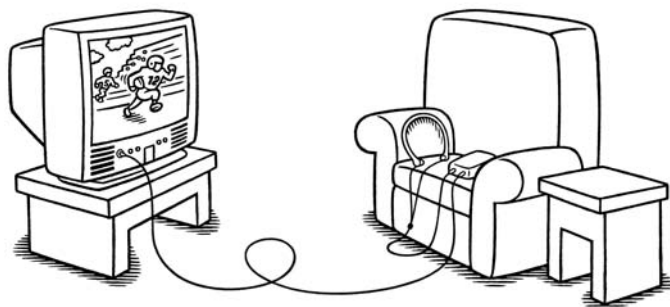
Closed Captions

Disadvantages

- You must "read" instead of listen to the show. Becoming comfortable with this may be difficult.
- It can be a challenge for those with vision or literacy problems.

Hardwired Personal Amplification

Hardwired amplification has an amplifier and a headset. The amplifier receives its signals from a microphone that is placed by the TV or from plugging into the TV headset jack. The amplifier sends the sound to a headset over a wire.



Hardwired Personal Amplification

Advantages

- It is easy to use and does not require any installation.
- Relatively inexpensive and the sound quality is very good.
- Provides more amplification than infrared systems.
- Can choose many different types of accessories such as:

Walkman Style Headsets:

Comfortable to wear, but you need to take out your hearing aids, or risk feedback.

Earbuds: Fit inside the ear. Smaller and more cosmetically

Hardwired Personal Amplification

continued

appealing, but you cannot wear hearing aids at the same time.

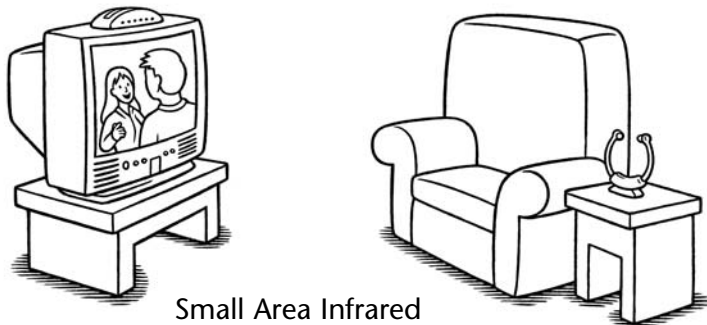
Neck Loop: A neck loop is worn around neck and can be placed under your clothes. This is only for users who have a telecoil on their hearing aid.

Disadvantages

- The cord isn't long, so there is a short distance between you and the TV.
- Be cautious – the cord runs along the floor from the TV to the user and may cause someone to trip.
- Batteries that will need to be replaced as often as every 5-8 hours of use time.

Small Area Infrared

This system plugs into the TV headset jack and sends a beam of light to a headset. The headsets have volume controls. In this system, there is no cord running from the TV to the headset.



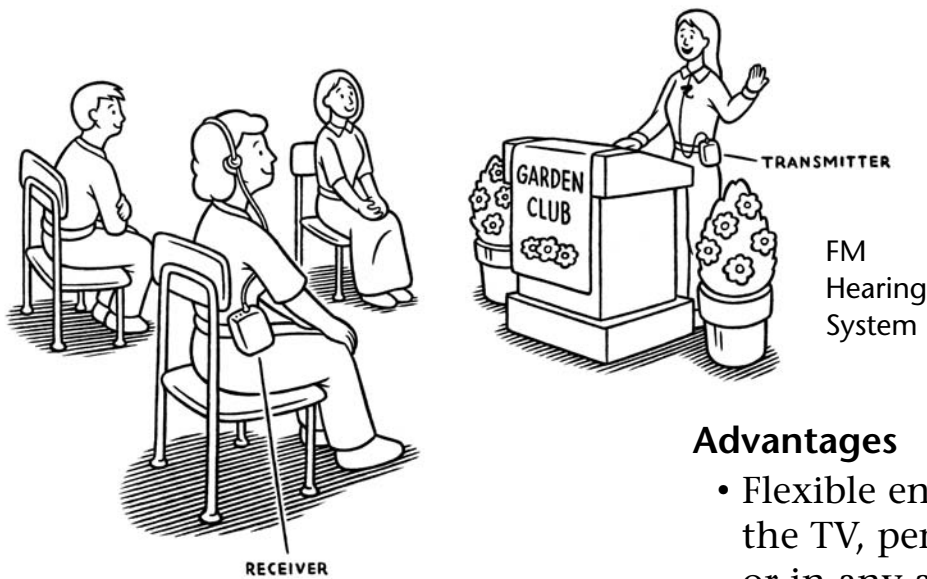
Small Area Infrared

Advantages

- Small area infrared is relatively easy to use.
- Systems are reasonably inexpensive.

Disadvantages

- This system works only in “line of sight.” If you turn your head you may hear static.
- It can only be used inside in a limited range.
- The transmitter must be plugged into an electrical outlet.
- Most TVs will mute if you plug into the headset jack which means that no one else can listen to the TV at the same time.
- The receiver requires batteries that will need to be recharged about every 5-8 hours of use time.
- May have compatibility issues with some hearing aids. When wearing a headset over a hearing aid, you may experience a high-pitched whistle or feedback from your hearing aid. Feedback from hearing aids can be caused by many problems, but in this case is caused by the headsets getting too close to the microphones on the hearing aids.



FM Hearing System: Frequency Modulated Hearing System

This system consists of two parts: a transmitter and a receiver. The transmitter sits near the source of the sound and has a small microphone. It transmits sound via FM radio waves to the receiver. The receiver is worn by the person with hearing loss.

Most receivers are a box similar to a portable cassette player or radio. The receiver itself can be clipped onto a belt or put in the pocket. There are several different listening options available to couple with the receiver such as walkman style headsets, earbuds and neckloop.

In addition, FM systems now have the option of an individual FM receiver: This individualized receiver is for people with behind-the-ear hearing aids. It is easy to use and has no cords or wires. It hooks directly onto the hearing aid and is powered by the hearing aid battery.

Advantages

- Flexible enough to be used with the TV, personal conversations, or in any area in which noise, distance or reverberation are an issue such as church, meetings, classrooms.
- Receivers can either be connected directly to hearing aids or can be used instead of hearing aids.
- No wires connecting the transmitter with the receiver. This allows for more independence.
- Comes in many different styles, power levels and features to accommodate almost any type of hearing loss.
- This device is very portable.

Disadvantages

- It is more expensive than other systems.
- Learning how to use an FM system is more involved than other systems.
- The unit needs to be charged regularly.
- It requires the speaker to wear a microphone and the listener to wear a receiver.