



# Now Hear This:

Tips for Better Hearing at Home and in the Community

## **What will happen during the appointment with a hearing professional?**

The first thing an ENT or an audiologist will do is compile a complete case history. A good case history is often the key to a successful hearing rehabilitation program. The case history allows discussion of wants, needs, and expectations. A thorough case history will probably include questions similar to the questions that follow. After a complete case history, the ENT or audiologist should complete a comprehensive hearing test. The results of the hearing test, coupled with the difficulties identified, will be the basis for developing a comprehensive plan of action.

## **Common questions asked by a hearing professional**

### **Why have you come to the ENT/audiologist for help? What difficulties are you experiencing?**

Be detailed with the answers. Describe not only general difficulties, but also use specific examples that will provide the ENT or audiologist with a clear picture of the problem. For example, the client may say, "I have difficulty hearing my grandchildren. At my grandson's birthday party last month I was unable to participate in the conversation at the pizza party."

If the client is specific with his answers, the professional will understand how the hearing impairment is affecting communication and it will give the examiner information about the client's lifestyle. This is important because treatment options

and recommendations often differ based on one's lifestyle. For example, different recommendations may be made for a person who is very active, working, and travels frequently, compared to someone who lives in a nursing facility and is unable to drive.

### **Have you previously had your hearing tested?**

Any previous testing supplied is extremely helpful so the examiner can follow any possible progression of hearing loss.

### **Have you worn a hearing aid in the past? Do you wear one now? If so, is it helpful? In what areas could it be improved?**

Again, the more specific the answer, the better.

# Common questions asked by a hearing professional



## Have you ever been exposed to loud noises during an extended period of time?

Exposure to loud noises without the use of ear protection essentially “speeds up” the aging process.

## Is there any family history of hearing loss?

There are certain types of hearing loss and medical conditions that are genetically linked.

## Have you ever had middle ear infections or wax accumulation?

These problems can create a temporary hearing loss (conductive hearing loss) and need to be addressed if necessary.

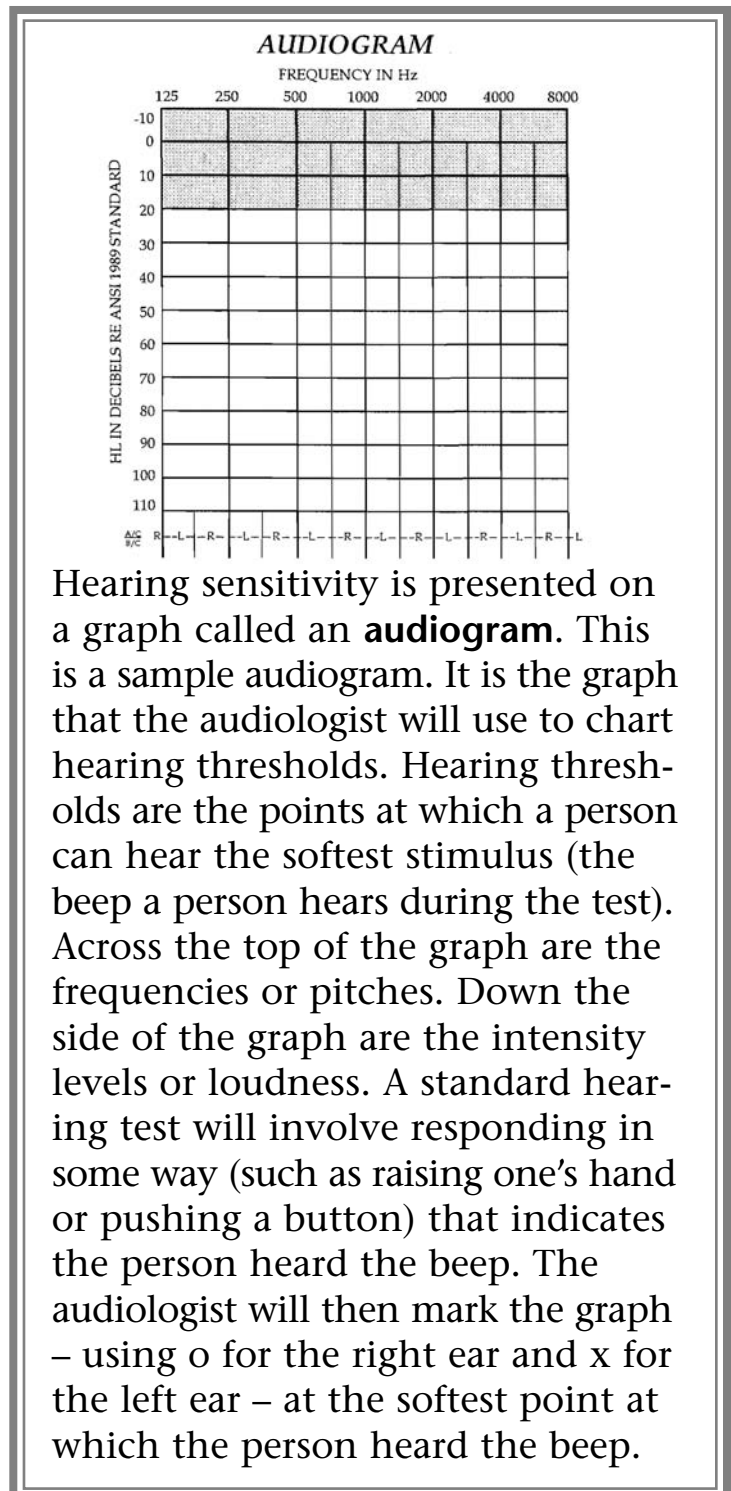
## Do you experience any ringing in your ears (tinnitus)?

This can be an indicator of a larger medical problem or, more commonly it can be a side effect of hearing loss. The hearing professional will also ask about severe dizziness or balance problems (vertigo).

## Do you have any other health conditions or concerns?

## What medications do you take?

There are some medications that can be harmful to hearing, such as powerful antibiotics or chemotherapy. Related medical conditions must be factored into treatment options.



# What are the different types of hearing aids?

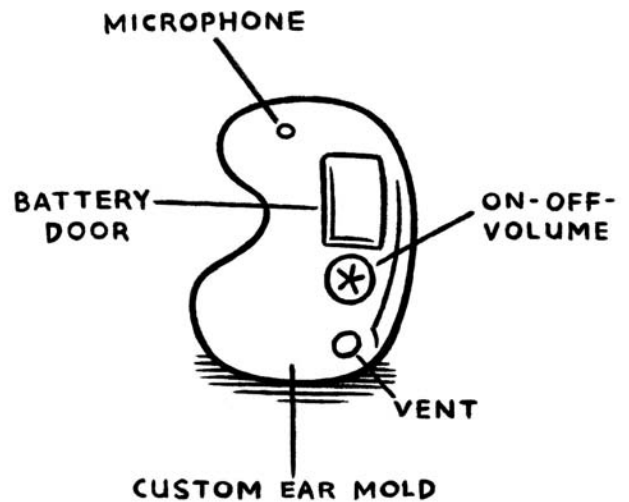
## 1. Analog Hearing Aids

An analog hearing aid is a basic hearing aid. The audiologist will be limited in the number of adjustments he or she can make in customizing the fit. Analog hearing aids are most appropriate for people who do most of their listening in quiet environments. Many manufacturers of hearing aids are moving away from analog hearing aids in favor of digital hearing aids. Analog hearing aids are typically less expensive than digital hearing aids. Analog hearing aids are available in all styles.

## 2. Digital Hearing Aids

These hearing aids have a tiny computer chip in them, enabling the audiologist to program the aid for a specific hearing loss. Digital hearing aids take a sound wave and break it into small, discreet bits of information. Those bits are then amplified before being converted back into sound. Breaking the information into these small bits of information allows a digital hearing aid to be better customized for an individual's hearing loss. Digital hearing aids can also make sounds more comfortable by amplifying soft sounds but not loud sounds. Digital hearing aids can be equipped with many different features/

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enhancements, which will affect the cost. Some digital hearing aids are equipped with more than one microphone, one that picks up sound in front and one that picks up sound from behind the person. The hearing aid can then be programmed to identify sound behind the person as 'noise' and block it out, placing the focus on the sound in front of the person.

An advantage of digital hearing aids is that they are self-adjusting, so most do not have volume wheels. This is ideal for a person with mobility or vision problems. Digital hearing aids range in price. A basic digital hearing aid will be similar in cost to an analog hearing aid. However, depending on the features or enhancements added, that cost could increase to nearly three times the price of an analog hearing aid. Digital hearing aids are available in all styles.