

After Your Hearing Aid Fitting

Who is on the UofM Hearing Team?:

- **Otolaryngologist:** A medical doctor (M.D.) specializing in diseases of the ear. Your otolaryngologist will ensure that there are no medical issues preventing you from using hearing aids. The otolaryngologist will also determine if there is hearing loss that can be corrected with surgery. Not all hearing aid patients will need to see an otolaryngologist.
- **Audiologist:** Audiologists hold either a master's degree or doctoral degree in the field of audiology and specialize in non-medical management of hearing loss. Your audiologist will assess your hearing, as well as select, program, and adjust your hearing aids and/or ear molds.
- **Hearing Aid Technician:** A very valuable member of the team, and someone whom you will have regular contact with. A hearing aid technician works closely with your audiologist to help process your hearing aid orders and interact with your insurance company. The hearing aid technician handles most hearing aid repairs and loss and damage claims. Our technicians offer routine hearing aid cleanings, hearing aid maintenance and ear mold tubing changes as a same day service. Some of our technicians are licensed hearing aid dispensers and can provide basic hearing aid adjustments.

What is the Trial Period? All hearing aids dispensed at the University of Michigan have a 30 day trial period, which will begin the day you pick up and pay for your hearing aids. If you are unhappy with your hearing aid, you may return the hearing aid for credit or exchange it for a different device. Lost hearing aids may not be returned for credit. If you have an outstanding balance

with the Health System, your credit will be applied to any balance rather than refunded.

What are the Best Ways to Communicate with Someone with Hearing Loss?

Friends and family members may require help adjusting to speaking with someone with hearing loss. Here are some important tips for your family members to help them make conversation as easy as possible.

Remind family members to:

- Face you when they speak
- Get your attention before they begin speaking
- Do not shout! Shouting will not help your understanding because it distorts words.
- Speak at a normal rate. Fast talking becomes muddled, but slow talking can as well. Speak clearly, but do not exaggerate speech.
- Rephrase misunderstood items, rather than simply repeating.
- Move to an area with good lighting and minimal background noise
- Be patient!

How Often Will I Use My Hearing Aid?

You should wear your hearing aids anytime you are “**awake and dry**”. This allows your brain to learn how to use new sound information in a process called “acclimatization”.

- Remember: you are not hearing sounds any **louder** than someone with normal hearing, but sounds will be different than what you are accustomed to.
- Wearing your hearing aid consistently will help you understand conversation better.

- If you are a new hearing aid user try to wear your hearing aids progressively longer every day. You should try and build up to full time hearing aid use. This will help you become a successful hearing aid user.

How Will I Care for My Hearing Aid?

When you keep your hearing aid clean, you can often avoid costly repairs.

- Use clean hands when handling your hearing aid.
- Before bed, wipe your aid off with a soft tissue to remove any earwax or debris.
- If you have a small soft brush, carefully brush the hearing aid case and microphones regularly.

How Often Will I Change the Batteries?

- Hearing aids use batteries called zinc-air batteries. These batteries are activated by the air around them, so any time they are exposed to air they are running. Keep the tab on the battery until you are ready to use it.
- Expect your batteries to last 3-10 days, depending on battery size, usage and the types of listening environments you find yourself in.
- Open battery doors at night to extend battery life and allow your hearing aids to “air out”.
- Some hearing aid batteries use rechargeable batteries, which need to be charged nightly. You should follow the specific instructions that came with your charger.
- Keep batteries out of reach of children, pets, or anyone that might mistakenly swallow one.

What can I do if I have any Issues or problems?

If your hearing aid is “dead” or weak:

- Try changing your battery.

- Wipe earwax off the aid, including inside the ear piece.
- Change your wax guard or change the dome.

If your hearing aid is making strange sounds or whistling:

- Change the battery.
- Wipe the outside of your ear with a soft tissue or towel to remove excess wax.
- Check placement of hearing aid – is it in deep enough?
- If whistling suddenly develops, this may be due to earwax buildup in your ears. You may need us to take a look in your ears.

If your hearing aid gets wet or is intermittent:

1. Remove the battery.
2. Place in a drying jar overnight.
3. Put a new battery in in the morning.
4. If you have frequent moisture related repairs you can consider obtaining an electronic drying system.

If you can't fix the problem yourself:

- Our technicians offer same-day service 8:00 am to 5:00 pm at all of our Michigan Hearing clinics.
- We ask that you call ahead prior to coming in for repair, but you can also drop your hearing aid off if you do not have time to meet with a technician. The technician can tell you if your aid is still in warranty. If the aid is out of warranty, they will explain the out-of-pocket repair costs.
- We ***do not*** recommend you make an appointment with your audiologist for repairs; this may delay your care. Your technician will ask you to see your audiologist if it is needed.

Is There Anything Else I Can do to Hear Well?

- If you have a significant hearing loss and do not perform well with your properly fitted hearing aid, you may be referred for a Cochlear Implant (CI) evaluation.

- If you continue to be significantly bothered by tinnitus or ringing in your ears after your hearing aids are fit, you may be referred to our Tinnitus program.
- There are a variety of assistive listening devices available. These include technology to transfer signals from cell phones, televisions, tablets and other computers directly to your hearing aids. This can significantly improve the signal quality from these devices.
- FM systems and/or remote microphone systems are available that can dramatically improve the signal quality in noisy or complex listening environment.
- Many hearing aids (or hearing aid accessories) are equipped to work with T-Coil systems that are often used in churches, theaters, or classrooms.
- We offer self-directed computer-based listening training programs that help to improve the way your brain “listens” and interprets sounds. This is different than using hearing aids to improve the way your ears “hear” sounds.
- The health system offers hearing rehabilitation classes to discuss hearing care options in greater detail. Ask your audiologist to enroll you in the next class.

Hearing Aid Technician Contact Information

- Taubman Center: (734) 232-3779
- East Ann Arbor: (734) 647-6591
- Livonia Center for Specialty Care: (734) 432-7811

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