

February 10, 2011 – Time to Purchase New Hearing Aids

Nancy A. Innes, AuD
Doctor of Audiology
Costco Wholesale

When Is It Time To Purchase New Hearing Aids?

There is not one quick answer to this question.

If you are considering new hearing aids or are unhappy with your current amplification, talk to your audiologist or dispenser about options.

If you are unsure of the answer you receive from your hearing healthcare professional...Get a second opinion!

The average life of a hearing aid is five years

So does that mean you HAVE to purchase new hearing aids?

No...but there are several things to keep in mind

Technology changes all the time

When your aids have reached three to five years old, there has been enough change during that time span, that you will probably notice a difference...FOR THE BETTER!!!

Furthermore...

- Manufacturers are not always keeping parts in stock for hearing aids that are over five years old.
- Every time you have hearing aid repaired, new components are now working with older parts.

Finally...Hearing aids do wear out

Reasons to purchase new hearing aids

Change in technology

- Bluetooth
- Improved adaptive microphones
- Better feedback optimizer
- Data analysis...just to name a few

Hearing has diminished

- Your current hearing aid may no longer provide adequate benefit

Weight loss

- As little as a ten pound weight loss can affect how your current instrument fits. This primarily affects custom made hearing aids.

Change in your lifestyle

- New partner
- Dexterity changes
- Visual problems
- Change jobs

Current aids have had multiple repairs

- Even with repairs...still not working quite right
- Cost of continuous repair
- Mixing old and new components
-

Adjusting to new hearing aids:Some things to keep in mind

The following is information taken from the Costco Hearing Aid Center's "Enjoy The Sounds of Life" brochure:

- First and most important...Expect your new aids to make things better...but not perfect.
- The best circuitry and programming can not restore your hearing to normal.
- Even those with normal hearing do not hear everything, nor can they hear well in extremely noisy environments

What to expect from new hearing aids

- Expect your own voice to sound different
- Expect sounds to be louder than you remember them
- Expect to hear things you have not heard for awhile...this may be both pleasant and unpleasant sounds
- Expect certain listening environments to be easier than others
- Expect artificial sound to be more challenging than live conversation
- Expect sounds to become more natural in three to four weeks
- Be Patient! One does not typically lose their hearing overnight, it takes time to adapt to the new stimulation

Reminders for family members

- Be patient...hearing loss is frustrating for both the hearing aid user and family members.
- Remember to get the hearing aid user's attention before talking to them.
- Face the person when you speak with them.
- Do not turn away from them while you are speaking
- It may help if you speak a little slower and articulate to allow better comprehension of what is said. Those with hearing impairments do not process sound in the same manner as those with normal hearing.
- Be in the same room, it is not realistic to expect someone with a hearing loss...even with hearing aids to hear you from another room.
 - Finally...be supportive!