



Your Hearing Has Deteriorated. Now What?

At first, the signs were barely even noticeable. When your TV started sounding quieter than usual, you simply turned it up a few notches. When people around you began mumbling, you taught yourself to read lips. When restaurants became too difficult to hear in, you decided to eat in more. Surely it was other people – not you – who had the problem.

Then your friends and family started to notice the change. They found you saying ‘pardon’ a lot more than usual, and noticed that the volume on your TV and radio was always maxed out. Now you’ve realized the truth: your hearing just isn’t what it used to be.

You’re Not Alone

Although you may feel like you’re the only one in your position, statistics show that there are approximately 35 million North Americans who experience hearing loss.¹

The key is to treat hearing loss as soon as possible so you can prevent any further deterioration and get back to enjoying the sounds you’ve been missing.

The best place to start is to visit a hearing healthcare clinic for a comprehensive hearing evaluation. For many clinics, a doctor’s referral isn’t necessary; you can simply call to make an appointment. Search the internet or look in the Yellow Pages under ‘hearing’ for a list of hearing healthcare clinics in your area.

What Exactly Is a Hearing Healthcare Professional?

A Hearing Healthcare Professional is someone dedicated to improving the quality of your hearing – and your life. They can be either an Audiologist or a Hearing Instrument Specialist. Some clinics employ both. An Audiologist has approximately six to seven years of university education. In addition to providing hearing tests, hearing aid selection and fittings for adults, an Audiologist is qualified to prevent, identify and assess hearing disorders for children. A Hearing Instrument Specialist has up to three years of community college education to develop clinical skills enabling him or her to test hearing, and select and fit appropriate hearing aids. Audiologists and Hearing Instrument Specialists provide counselling to help with communication strategies, preparing the user for new sounds in different environments, and adjustments to the physical aspect of wearing amplification. Whether you choose to see an Audiologist or a Hearing Instrument Specialist, getting your hearing checked on a regular basis is important to your overall health and wellbeing.

Financial Assistance

To help cover the costs of your hearing aid(s), the Provincial and Federal governments have various funding programs in place. Eligibility and assistance varies from program to program, and across all provinces. For a list of hearing aid subsidies

across Canada, visit the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association (CHHA) website at www.chha.ca/documents/Hearing_Aid_Subsidies_Across_Canada.pdf. There are a number of other organizations that can provide financial assistance; visit www.chha.ca/chha/projects-funding.php for a full list. If you have a personal health insurance plan, check and see what coverage is available for hearing aids before you meet with your Hearing Healthcare Professional. Some clinics offer flexible financing options.

Today's Advanced Technology

In the past, hearing aids were big, clunky, and characterized by disruptive whistling or feedback. They also amplified all sounds equally, making listening very difficult and tiring. Meanwhile, one could only adjust the volume by turning a tiny dial on the hearing aid, which could be difficult for very young or very old fingers to manage.

Today, advancements in technology have paved the way for small, discreet, highly sophisticated, and fashionable hearing aids. Modern instruments also provide near-perfect sound reproduction and comfort in all listening environments. They automatically adjust to the environment and your listening needs, and are able to filter noise and enhance speech. Soft sounds are more audible, and loud sounds are still loud but

comfortable. A wide selection of hearing aid technology and styles exist today, and some are virtually undetectable. Your Hearing Healthcare Professional can help you choose the technology level and style that best suits your hearing loss and needs.

A World of Sound Awaits

Studies² have shown that those who have treated their hearing (versus those who haven't) often reported benefits including better relationships with their families, increased self esteem, improved mental health, and a greater feeling of independence and security.

When it comes to something as important as your hearing, trust the experts. For over 50 years, Widex has been the global leader in hearing aid technology. In 1995, Widex introduced the first-ever digital in-the-ear hearing aid. Today, Widex continues to introduce premium sound quality and sophisticated technology based on leading-edge research. Whatever your lifestyle and whatever your needs, Widex has a solution that's right for you.

For more information on Widex and its line of advanced, user-friendly instruments, visit www.widex.ca.



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SOURCES:

1 www.hear-it.org/page.dsp?area=858

2 The National Council On Aging's large-scale national survey of older Americans, 1999