

What to Expect from your Hearing Instrument/s

Some people put on hearing instruments and hear better right away. For most, there is more of an adjustment period. The single most important factor in the process is the attitude and commitment of the wearer — and the development of realistic expectations. There are two things to know right from the start:

- 1) hearing aids don't sound the same as having your old hearing,**
- 2) adjusting to wearing them takes time.**

Just like getting comfortable with a pair of bifocals, you may experience some difficulty at first, but it will likely pass in time. It's important to know what to expect and to learn how to get the most from your hearing instruments in different situations. You'll need both willingness and patience to re-learn a new way of hearing. It helps to start slowly as well as to be consistent in using your new hearing aids.

The Occlusion Effect

The occlusion effect occurs when a hearing aid completely fills the ear canal. It can cause the wearer's voice to sound *funny*. Many people complain that they sound hollow or it's like they are talking into a barrel. Chewing food can also sound odd, and even cause discomfort, to someone with occluded canals. Normally when people talk or chew, the produced sound vibrations escape through the unblocked ear – nothing is heard. But when the ear is blocked by a hearing aid, the vibrations cannot escape and are instead bounced back down to the eardrum, which produces the louder *hollow* sound. Open Fit hearing aids are an answer to this problem as they do not occlude the canal. The in-ear section of the aid is not moulded to fit tightly in the way that other types of hearing aid are. The occlusion effect can be particularly troublesome where the hearing aid wearer has largely unimpaired hearing in the lower frequencies.