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There are some issues you should keep in mind as you develop appropriate expectations of what your hearing aids can and cannot do for you. Understanding these key issues can help you succeed in using amplification.

**Restore Hearing:** No matter how technically advanced a hearing aid is, in most cases hearing aids cannot restore your hearing to normal, except in some very mild cases. Hearing aids should dramatically improve your ability to communicate with friends and family.

**Types of Hearing Aids:** Not all hearing aids perform the same way with every type of hearing loss. Your audiologist will help provide you the best choice for your individual circumstances. What may be a great hearing aid for your friend's hearing loss may or may not be appropriate for you.

**Hearing in Noise:** No matter what any ad may say, no hearing aid has been designed that will filter out all background noise. Some hearing aids can reduce amplification of some types of noise or make you more comfortable in the presence of noise. One of the more effective solutions for improving speech

intelligibility in noisy situations is hearing aids with directional microphones. When directional hearing aids are coupled with digital signal processing, you can feel confident that your hearing aids are optimized for improving your quality of life in noisy environments. Remember,

during your trial period you have the chance to wear them during your daily activities with the people you listen to. If the hearing aids do not work well for you, and your audiologist cannot adjust them to suit you, you may return or exchange them within that time. Your money can be applied

to follow the instructions of your audiologist. Most people need a period of adjustment to get used to the noisy world and for their brain to learn to interpret speech again. It can take several months to begin deriving the maximum benefit from your hearing aids.

## Keys to hearing aid success

By Audrey G. Freeman, Au.D., Doctor of Audiology

people with normal hearing ability hear noise too.

**Fit and Comfort:** You should expect the fit of a hearing device to be comfortable. There should not be any soreness when wearing your hearing aids. If there is, go back to your audiologist.

**Whistling and Feedback:** It is normal for hearing aids to squeal or whistle when you insert and remove them. If they whistle while wearing them, it may be due to poor fit, wax in the hearing aid or your ears, or a need for a sound adjustment.

**Trial Period:** The State of Illinois requires that hearing aids sold in Illinois should have at least a 30 day trial period. Some practices offer longer trial times. Within the

to a different set of hearing aids, or you can give them back. If the aids are returned, most offices will retain a fee for their time and expenses. Check before you purchase your devices what the policy is and what the restocking fee will be if you return. This trial period ensures that the hearing aids you have work well and are comfortable to wear.

**Adjustment Period:** Give your hearing aids a chance and be sure



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