

Many people put off purchasing a hearing instrument because they are not fully aware of the benefits new technology can provide. They may base their decision on a bad experience a neighbor or friend may have had with their hearing aid. The fact is that modern hearing aids are very different than older types and can be helpful to the majority of people with a hearing impairment whether the loss is mild or severe.

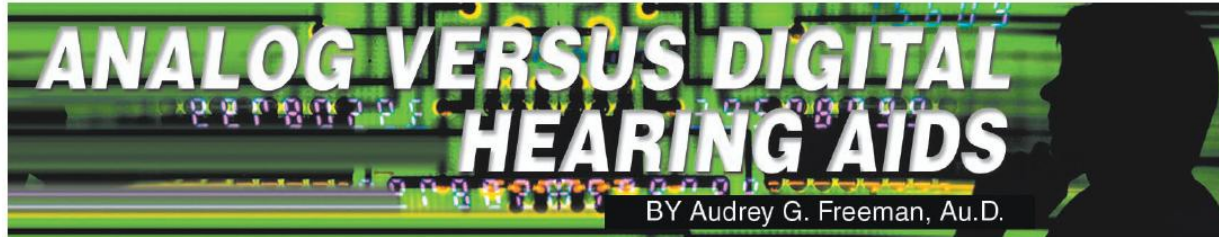
phone that picks up the sound and converts it into small electrical signals. These signals are amplified by transistors and sent to a receiver. Analog hearing aids do not have all of the features available in advanced digital aids, but they are the least expensive to purchase.

Digital devices work differently. They take the sound signal from the microphone and convert it into bits of data (numbers – 0 and 1) that can be

is coming from. This improves the person's listening comfort in noisy environments and may even improve their speech understanding.

One major advantage of digital aids is that your hearing professional is able to adjust digital hearing aids right in their office. If your hearing changes in two years, the aid can have the power and/or pitch adjusted in a few minutes without having to send it back to the manufacturer.

the level of service provided after the purchase. Some hearing providers include hearing aid adjustments, follow-up testing, in-office repairs, and cleaning in the purchase price. Some offer these services free of charge for a limited time only, while others include these services in their purchase price for the life of the hearing aid. If you decide to return the hearing aid after the State mandated minimum 30 day trial period, many providers will



Hearing aids are built with either analog or digital circuits. These two circuits process the incoming sound differently. Back in 1997, only 12% of the hearing instruments sold were digital. In 2005, 93% of devices sold were digital. It's also worthy to mention that in 1997 62.9% of people who purchase new aids were satisfied with them compared to over 77% now. There may be a correlation.

Analog devices contain a micro-

manipulated by a tiny computer chip inside of the hearing aid. This type of processing allows the sounds to be precisely matched to the person's hearing loss. The better the processor, the better the matching. Digital devices are fine tunable for each person and very flexible allowing for crisper and clearer sound quality. Sophisticated digital hearing aids can determine if a sound is speech or noise and which direction the sound

Costs of digital aids vary with the level of sophistication of the computer chip. They range widely in price. The more features the aid has typically the more expensive it will be. Some features to consider are noise suppression circuits, directional microphones (ability to turn off the back microphone in noisy areas), feedback (whistling) circuitry, built in telephone amplifiers, and the number of frequency bands.

Other considerations on cost include

typically charge a restocking fee (to cover the provider's return fee to the manufacturer, time spent, etc.).

Like many other products these days, the old saying still applies... "You get what you pay for". More features and functionality usually mean higher cost. Once you choose a hearing professional you trust, they can work closely with you to find the best product for your hearing requirements.