

OFF TO A GOOD START WITH **HEARING INSTRUMENTS**



Thanks to your new hearing instruments, you can now look forward to re-entering the wonderful world of sound.

But remember – better hearing is best achieved after a period of gradual adjustment. This booklet is designed to prepare you for this period and to help you to get the most out of wearing your instruments.

WHAT TO EXPECT:



From the moment you start wearing hearing instruments, you begin the process of re-learning how to hear. Your brain has to get used to new sounds and stimuli it hasn't received in a while. For most people, there is an adjustment period requiring practice using the instruments. At first, some sounds might be overpowering and you may find yourself easily getting tired. This is perfectly normal. Your brain is working hard to catch up, but with patience and a positive attitude you'll soon succeed.

START THE RE-LEARNING PROCESS SLOWLY



Begin wearing your hearing instruments for just a few hours a day in the familiar, quiet surroundings of your home. Then slowly increase the amount of time you wear your instruments each day.

Walk around your home identifying and locating sounds that you may not have heard for a while. Get reacquainted with common sounds such as water running from a tap. Notice how the newspaper rustles as you turn its pages. Listen to your alarm clock or the phone ringing. At first, everything probably sounds a little different, even your own voice. But don't worry – you'll soon get used to it!



COMMUNICATION WITH OTHERS



Human speech is one of the most complex sounds, so keeping up with conversations can initially require a little more effort. Begin at home, listening to someone whose voice you know well. Then try following a conversation in a slightly noisier environment. Soon you'll find out where and how your new hearing instruments work best.

Remember too, that communicating with others combines listening with attention, concentration and visual cues. You'll understand more by observing facial expressions and gestures. And don't forget that your hearing instruments, like your ears, pick up sound best from the front. So make sure you place yourself where you can see the other person's face, and not too far away from them. Also, ask your family members to speak to you in a normal tone of voice and not to put their hands in front of their mouths.

ADJUSTING TO DIFFERENT SOUND ENVIRONMENTS

After the first week, most of the usual sounds and voices should seem quite familiar again, and you can start wearing your hearing instruments in a wider variety of sound environments such as work or social occasions. Practice selecting specific sounds and voices, focusing your attention on them as you do so.

In a public place such as a meeting hall, sit as close to the speaker as possible, or at least where you can see the speaker's face. In restaurants and cafés, try to sit with your back to the main source of background noise. Standing on the sidewalk of a busy street or sitting by an open window is likely to make it more difficult to hear.

LISTENING TO THE RADIO OR WATCHING TV



For best results when watching television, be sure to optimize distance and minimize distraction. With your new hearing instruments on, try sitting 2 to 3 meters away from the screen with the TV volume set to a normal, comfortable level for others. Then adjust your distance from the TV set and/or the volume level on your hearing instruments to find your own comfort zone. The same goes for radio. The closer you are to the speaker and the less background noise, the better the sound you'll get.

There are also a number of assistive devices that enable you to enjoy watching TV and listening to the radio without bothering those around you. For example, if your hearing instruments contain a telecoil, you can use a loop system. Another option often used with hearing instruments is an infrared system also known as “wireless headphones”.

TAKE CARE OF YOUR INSTRUMENTS

Your hearing instruments have to contend with moisture and heat, earwax, skin flakes, oil and hair care products. Here are some practical tips that will help to keep them functioning properly.

- > Always keep your hearing instruments clean and dry.
- > To preserve battery life when you're not wearing your instruments, open the battery compartment door so the battery is not in contact with the internal components.
- > Make a habit of cleaning your hearing instruments on a daily basis.
- > Never use household cleaning fluids or oil to clean your instrument.
- > At night, store your hearing instruments in a hearing instrument drying kit (available from your hearing care professional).
- > Always check to make sure you've removed your instruments before swimming, showering or applying hairspray. It's a good idea to check your pockets before washing clothes as well.



We wish you all the best with your new hearing instrument. If you need any more information, contact your hearing care professional.

