It gets better

As you wear your hearing aid, you will begin to adapt to the new sounds - this is called habituation. Having hearing aids is a learning process, you first need to understand the sounds that you are hearing. Once you know what the sound is, you can then decide if it is important to listen to.

Hearing and listening are different. We hear all of the time (passive), listening however takes a level of attention and processing of the sound (active). You will need to re-learn which sounds are important to listen to, and which belong in the 'background'.

Be positive

Your attitude to what you are hearing, plays a vital role in getting along with your hearing aid. If you are positive about the new sounds your brain will accept the changes more easily.

If you make a negative association to a sound, it will be more difficult to accept, as your brain will need to change your perception of this first.

It takes time

There are no short-cuts with hearing aids. In order to get used to it you need to wear it consistently. Your brain needs time to understand what we have changed, and why. This can vary from person to person.

There may come a stage where we are unable to improve things with the hearing aid. There are other factors that contribute to how well we will get along with a hearing aid. We need to consider all areas—stress, attention, memory, processing ability. All of these things, and more, can impact the outcome.

Still struggling?

If you are still having issues with the hearing aids after wearing them for some time, please do not hesitate to get in touch. You can come along to one of our maintenance sessions (listed in your record book). Or call us for an appointment, where available

Phone (direct line): 01270 612197
E-mail: audiology@mcht.nhs.uk

This information is available in large print, audio, Braille and other languages. To request a copy, please ask a member of staff.
First steps

Are you deciding whether or not to try a hearing aid? This should not only be based on your hearing levels, but also the impact this has on your everyday living.

Although you may not realise it, you could be missing out on a whole range of everyday sounds, that make up the world around us. Things like bird song, the click of the light switch, raindrops on the umbrella. All of these little sounds build up to make quite a complex listening environment.

You may even have started to become reliant on other people, family members or friends. Asking them to make phone calls, avoiding social situations, getting them to relay the conversation for you, or to hold the conversation on your behalf. This can put an extra strain on relationships, and is tiring for all parties involved.

What is a hearing aid?

A hearing aid is an electronic device designed to amplify sound. Digital hearing aids can be tuned to your hearing loss; they have technology inside them to help you hear better in different scenarios.

How will it help me?

A hearing aid will make sounds you are unable to hear naturally audible again. This may make listening to speech easier, or you may be able to hear things, such as the doorbell, that you may have otherwise missed.

What will it sound like?

The hearing aid provides digital sound, therefore it will sound ‘unnatural’ to start with. This is something a lot of people struggle with, as their expectations were that they would hear ‘normally’ again. The hearing aid will sound tinny and metallic, often described as like listening to an old radio. You will hear lots of everyday sounds differently, sharper and more clearly. This can be distracting, and even annoying to start with.

My own voice sounds different

Your own voice may sound different too—deeper, there may be a slight echo. Remember you have not only heard everyone else with a hearing loss, you have also been listening to your own voice with the same hearing loss.

I can hear all the noise!

Most people find with hearing aids that they can hear the noise more. "I want to hear the speech, not the background noise." Unfortunately, we are not able to turn up the speech alone. Some of this will settle, as you learn to adapt to these sound. Sometimes we are unable to change this. The hearing aid will work hard to help you where possible.

For example, the hearing aid increases the sounds for “sh”, “f”, “s” in speech. This is also where the noises like rushing water, or crackling paper lie. If we turn down the noise (crackling paper), we reduce the clarity of speech. Tuning out some of the sounds is a learning process and will take time to adapt to.

It is important to look at the bigger picture. You could be using a lot more energy to hold a conversation than you used to.