



Ask Your Audiologist

Q. *I have acquired a pair of hearing aids that belonged to someone else. Can you make them work for me?*

A. When you say you “acquired them”, I hope you don’t mean you mugged someone in a dark alley! Actually, I run into this situation frequently. That is, legitimate acquisitions not muggings. It is not uncommon for a family member of someone who has passed away to inquire if the hearing aids could work for them. I have even had patients ask me before purchasing new hearing aids if they could be used by a family member in the event of death.

Many times hearing aids can be handed down to another individual. I like seeing hearing aids that are in good condition get continued use, especially for another person with limited finances. In order to consider this type of “swap”, there are some conditions that must be met. The first requirement is the hearing aids must be the style that fits behind the ears. The part of these aids that go into your ear canal are easily replaced with new parts that fit your ear properly. Hearing aids that are entirely within the bowl of the ear can not be refit to another ear.

The second requirement is the hearing aids must have features that are appropriate to your hearing. Most current hearing aids can be reconfigured for many types of hearing loss. You need to have a current hearing evaluation for me to know the compatibility. (I’ll bet you’re overdue for a hearing recheck anyways.) The cost for the services and custom ear molds (if needed) is \$300–\$500. This is about 10-20% of the cost of a typical pair of new hearing aids. This includes a hearing evaluation, hearing aid reprogramming and 2-3 follow up visits. Is it a good idea to spend the money this way? If the above two requirements are met and the hearing aids are in good condition, I see no problem at all. I would give you a very specific prognosis for benefit after I checked your hearing and looked over the hearing aids.

Kristy's Internship

I introduced you to Kristy Deiters in the last newsletter. Many of you have had the chance to meet her in person by now. I thought you'd like to know more. Kristy is a 4th year doctoral student at WMU. She began a year long internship with us in May. She's blending in really well with patients and staff. As an aside, audiologists used to begin practice with a masters degree that required 1-2 years after the bachelors degree. The Doctor of Audiology degree, which requires 4 years post bachelors degree, is now mandatory for new practitioners. The field has changed!

I've asked Kristy to answer a few questions to help you get to know her.

Why did you decide to be an audiologist?

Doesn't everyone want to be an audiologist when they grow up? No, actually, the word "audiology" didn't exist in my vocabulary until I accompanied my husband to one of his hearing aid appointments about 5 years ago. I was immediately interested in helping people in such a different way, and promptly rearranged my vocabulary to include audiology forevermore!

What do you like best about working here?

I like everything about working here, even the friendly harassment (you know who you are!). Really, everyone I've met has been so welcoming and friendly, and I work with the nicest people around (I may be a bit biased). I am also really enjoying putting the past 3 years of ear-specific education to good use outside of the classroom, although some days are definitely a challenge!

Anything else?

Well, when I'm not busy battling ear wax and hearing aid squeal, I like to bake. My favorite fall recipe is for "Downeast Maine Pumpkin Bread". Try it, but beware that you may eat a whole loaf before you even realize it!

Downeast Maine Pumpkin Bread

Ingredients

1 (15 ounce) can pumpkin puree	2 teaspoons baking soda
4 eggs	1½ teaspoons salt
½ cup vegetable oil	1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
½ cup applesauce	1 teaspoon ground nutmeg
⅔ cup water	½ teaspoon ground cloves
3 cups white sugar	½ teaspoon ground ginger
3½ cups all-purpose flour	

Directions

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Grease and flour three 7x3 inch loaf pans. In a large bowl, mix together pumpkin puree, eggs, oil, applesauce, water and sugar until well blended. In a separate bowl, whisk together the flour, baking soda, salt, cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves and ginger. Stir the dry ingredients into the pumpkin mixture until just blended. Pour into the prepared pans. Bake for about 50 minutes in the preheated oven. Loaves are done when toothpick inserted in center comes out clean.

IF THE BATTERY FITS...

Every hearing aid requires a specific size battery. THEY ARE NOT INTERCHANGEABLE. You will break your hearing aid by forcing the wrong size in the door. Maybe you'll even electrocute yourself (just kidding). Recently, I was asked to check a hearing aid that was not working. I always check the battery first. I opened the battery door and it was filled with small bits of tissue. I removed the tissue and there was a very small battery inside...much too small for that hearing aid. I asked the patient why

they had done that. I was told that a relative had a lot of leftover batteries from an old hearing aid so they were saving money. Fortunately, I was able to remove the wrong battery without damaging the aid. If you don't remember your battery size, give us a call. We keep these records. If the battery door does not close easily, please do not force it. If you jam the wrong size battery in the aid you will break it. If the battery does not fill the compartment, it may fall inside the aid and rattle every time you move.

Did this ever happen to you?



My wife and I were out for dinner. At the end of the meal, I told Lynn that I was going to the restroom. When I returned to the table she wasn't there. I thought she also had gone to the restroom. I paid the bill. I waited. I got tired of sitting so I stood by the cash register to wait. I began to wonder if she wasn't well, or perhaps ran off to fulfill her lifelong dream to become a dolphin trainer. A moment later she tapped me on the shoulder and asked what was taking me so long. She had gone to the car to wait and reminded me that she had told me so as I walked away. I said, "Did I reply?" She said, "No". I said, "Don't I usually answer you when I hear you?" "Hmmm." We both laugh (usually) when things like this happen (and we get lots of practice because it happens a lot).

Everyone hears best in close up face to face conversation. It doesn't matter how good or bad your hearing is, or how fancy your hearing aids are. It really helps if you get the person's attention before you tell them something, especially if it's really important (e.g. "I decided I'm going to shave my head and get a purple dinosaur tattooed to my scalp.").

What's New?

"Sound Recover" is a non-linear frequency compression algorithm incorporated in most new Phonak hearing aids. That was just about the most gibberish ever included in this newsletter. Now let me say it simply. "Sound Recover" is a feature that makes high-pitched sounds easier to hear. The process is complex but thanks to the incredibly smart and fast digital processors used in current hearing aids, it all happens for you automatically. We tell the hearing aid which high-pitched sounds may be unusable by your ears. The hearing aid then changes the pitch of those sounds into a range that your ear can use. The results should be improved sound quality and clarity. And the cost? "Sound recover" is included on most new Phonak products at no additional cost.



Hearing TV is difficult for many of us. Here are three effective devices to make TV more enjoyable.

"TV Ears" have long been available. They are used instead of hearing aids to listen to TV. You wear wireless headphones that receive sound from a transmitter placed on your TV. You can adjust the volume for your comfort without overpowering everyone else. Cost \$166.41.

"Loop Systems" wrap a length of wire around a room that creates a magnetic field that can be received by the telecoil inside the majority of hearing aids. If you don't know if your hearing aid has this feature we'd be happy to check. The advantage of loop systems is you don't remove your hearing aid, so you can continue to hear conversation as well as TV. We have looped our front office for demonstration purposes. Next time you're in the office give it a try. If you're impressed we can talk about how to loop your TV room or just your favorite chair. Cost \$200-300.

"TV Link" is the latest device available. It is an accessory that can be used with most newer Phonak hearing aids. TV link has a transmitter that plugs into your TV and a "pendant-like" neck loop that you wear. When you turn on TV the sound automatically transmits into your hearing aids. You continue to hear normally through your hearing aids so you can have conversation while watching TV. In addition, the neck loop can receive phone calls from your cell phone. This is an awesome feature that allows you to hear the phone in both ears without having to press any buttons on your hearing aids or fuss with the position of the phone. We have a demonstration unit set up in our reception area for you to try. Cost \$300.



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Fall Tune Up

It's time to tune up your hearing aids before the snow flies (or you fly south). On Wednesday September 29 we will be available to "winterize" your hearing aids.

We will:

- Clean your hearing aids
- Replace worn parts
- Verify they are working properly

As always there will be refreshments and conversation while you wait. You can also check out our new TV devices.

These brief visits are by appointment only and are intended for routine maintenance. If you need your hearing retested or hearing aids programmed this would require another visit.



**Call to schedule
your appointment on
Wednesday September 29.
324-0555
or toll free 888-660-2482**