

# Sound Advice

Winter 2007 / Spring 2008

Courtesy of Physicians Hearing Services

## Which Hearing Instrument is Correct For Me?

There are two major decisions in selecting the hearing instrument that will best meet your communication needs: 1) the size of the hearing instruments and 2) the special features in the hearing instruments. Both of these will affect the cost and capabilities of the hearing aids.



**Hearing Instrument Style and Size:** Hearing instruments come in five basic styles. The size and style of the hearing instrument depends on factors such as degree of hearing loss, physical structures or anatomy and types of special features.

1. **Behind-the-Ear (BTE):** The BTE fits above your ear and has a custom-made ear piece (an “earmold”) that directs the amplified sound into your ear. This style of hearing aid is appropriate for any degree of hearing loss.
2. **In-the-Ear (ITE):** This is the most common sized hearing instrument and fills up most of the bowl of your outer ear. The size of hearing instrument is also appropriate for most hearing losses.
3. **In-the-Canal (ITC):** The size of this hearing instrument is smaller than the ITE and extends slightly from your ear canal. This style is commonly used for milder degrees of hearing loss.
4. **Completely-in-the-Canal (CIC):** The CIC is the smallest style of hearing instrument and fits entirely in the ear canal. It is used for very mild hearing losses.
5. **Open Ear or Receiver-in-the-Ear (RITE):** This hearing instrument is designed for people with fairly good hearing in the low- to mid-pitches who have a mild-to-severe hearing loss in the high pitches. The electronics of the hearing instrument are worn behind the ear and sound is directed into the ear via a very thin tube or wire, allowing the ear canal to remain more open than a conventional ITE, ITC, or CIC hearing device.

Shena W. Martin, M.A., CCC-A  
Jasmit K. Bal, Au.D., CCC-A  
Michelle L. Bishop, M.A., CCC-A  
D. Krystin Farrell, Au.D., CCC-A  
Mark G. Smith, Au.D., CCC-A  
Cynthia L. Martzen, Au.D., CCC-A

*The Audiologists of  
Physicians Hearing Services*

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Your hearing test results (the “audiogram”) will largely determine the appropriate size and style. With greater degrees of hearing loss, smaller sized hearing aids usually do not provide the appropriate gain or benefit. Additionally, many special features are not available in the smaller sizes. Your audiologist will discuss in detail which size and style would be best for you based on your hearing test results and types of special features you may want.

**Hearing Aid Circuitry:** Today’s digital hearing instruments contain a small computer chip that analyzes, processes, and amplifies sounds. Because these instruments are computer programmed, digital hearing devices offer more options and special features than previous generations of hearing instruments. Where older hearing aids amplified all sounds by the same amount regardless of a patient’s hearing loss, digital hearing instruments analyze and amplify sounds based on each individual patient’s needs and environmental factors.



## **Special Features on Hearing Instruments:**

Hearing instruments of any size and circuitry type may have a number of special features that are designed to improve hearing in specific situations. For example, some hearing devices are designed to control volume automatically rather than manually by the patient. Other instruments can be adjusted to have one setting for quiet situations, like watching television alone, and another setting for noisy situations, such as a noisy restaurant or cafeteria with friends. This feature can even be controlled automatically by sensing the environment you are in. There are a variety of other features, such as a special telephone setting, circuitry that limits feedback (the loud squealing sound that can come from a hearing aid), and circuitry that attempts to reduce steady noise signals to make speech more audible.



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**Cost of Hearing Instruments:** When you purchase hearing instruments, not only are you purchasing a healthcare device, but also the professional services that assist you in the selection, fitting, and maintenance of the hearing instruments. The cost of a hearing instrument varies depending upon the style, size, circuitry, and features that will best fit your needs. Digital hearing instruments range in price from \$1000-\$3200 (roughly twice this amount for two). The range in price reflects the different sizes and features that are available. Our hearing instruments come with repair warranties, as well as loss and damage warranties. There is also a 30-day evaluation period on all hearing instruments.



### **Hearing Instrument Manufacturers:**

There are over 80 companies that make hearing devices. Physicians Hearing Services has chosen to dispense hearing aids from several of the top-tier companies to provide our patients with the most options and to better meet individual needs.



Choosing the correct hearing instrument to best meet your needs involves an in-depth discussion and consultation with your audiologist. To determine the appropriate hearing device for you, you and your audiologist will discuss your hearing test, your size and style preferences, communication situations, and listening needs. After careful evaluation and consideration, you and your audiologist should be able to determine which hearing instrument is most appropriate for you. The commitment of Physicians Hearing Services is to the individual, to help you recognize your potential in communication.

### **We would like to announce a new addition to our Audiology staff:**

**Cynthia L. Martzen, Au.D., CCC-A** - Joined our practice March 3rd, 2008. She has been a practicing Audiologist for over twenty years, and previously owned her own practice. She provides diagnostic audiology services, and she is a welcome addition to our staff.



## PHYSICIANS HEARING SERVICES

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### Office Hours

Scheduled  
appointments  
8 am - 5 pm  
Monday-Friday  
**closed 12-1**  
**(559) 432-5973**

*Mark your calendars*

## Upcoming Seminar

*Look for a flyer on our upcoming seminar.*

Date: Saturday, April 19th, 2008

Time: 10am - 12pm

Location: Central California ENT Medical Group (CCENT)  
1351 E Spruce Ave  
Fresno, CA 93720

Speaker: Mark G. Smith, Au.D.  
of Physicians Hearing Services and CCENT

Topic: Hearing Loss and Modern Solutions

