Center for Hearing and Communication

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Are OTC Hearing Aids Right for You?
and
Mental Health and Hearing Loss

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Director of Emotional
Health and Wellness

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Agenda

- Introduction to CHC
- Hearing loss basics and options
- OTC hearing aids
  - Features and pricing
  - Prescription hearing aids
  - Considerations & tips
- Mental health and hearing loss
  - Common experiences
  - Living and coping & support services

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Introduction to CHC

Center for Hearing and Communication is a non-profit organization providing services since 1910

Vision:
Communication without limits

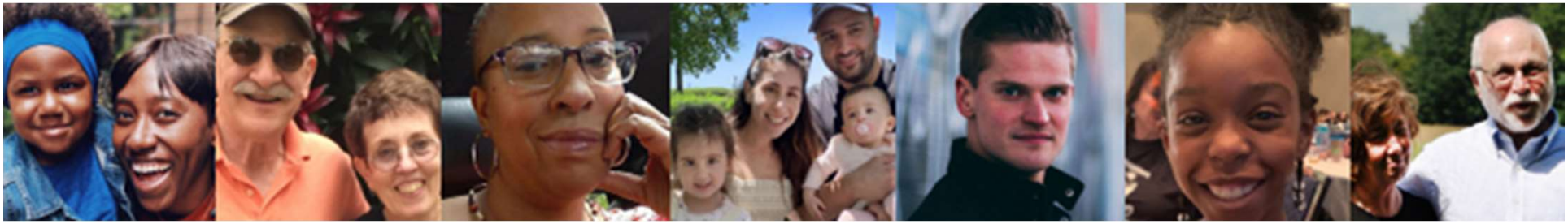
Audiology

Speech and Language

Emotional Health and Wellness

Education

Outreach and Mobile Unit



Telehealth and In-Person Services 50 Broadway, 6th Floor, Lower Manhattan

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Hearing Loss Basics and Options

Untreated hearing loss & comorbidities

Depression

Dementia & Alzheimer's Disease

Falling

Higher risk of hearing loss

- Cardiovascular disease
- Pre-Diabetes & Diabetes
- Kidney disease
- Osteoporosis

- **Hearing loss types and causes**
- **Common solutions**
  - Hearing Aids
  - Cochlear Implants
  - Assistive devices and accessories
- **Latest tech features & options**
  - Streaming
  - Remote programming and testing
  - Rechargeable
  - Over-the-counter hearing aids

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OTC Hearing Aids

- Launched Fall 2022
- New self-fit category of over the counter hearing aids regulated by the FDA
- *Perceived* mild to moderate hearing loss
- Age 18 or older

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OTC Hearing Aids

- Available online or retail
- Does not require a hearing test or prescription**
- Some products will require a smartphone for set up and controls
- Important to check - return policy and warranty

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Not a OTC Hearing Aid Candidate

If you have any of these symptoms, you may NOT be an OTC hearing aid candidate:

- Tinnitus (ringing, hissing, buzzing) in one or both ears
- Better hearing in one ear
- Any pain in or fluid/discharge from the ear
- History of ear infections or excessive ear wax
- Vertigo
- A sudden hearing loss or rapidly getting worse

Other reasons for not pursuing an OTC hearing aid:

- Not tech savvy
- Don’t own a smartphone or tablet
- Limited dexterity
- Require hands-on assistance

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OTC Hearing Aids & Optimal Fit

- Studies have shown that people do not often accurately determine their hearing loss level and tend to underestimate it
    - Likely fit for comfort vs. optimal benefit
    - People get used to how they are hearing and don't know how much they are missing

- **An audiologist can guide you to an optimal fit**

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Cost of OTC Hearing Aids vs. Prescription Hearing Aids

OTC Hearing Aids

$700 - $1,995 per pair*

- May not be fit to your hearing loss
- May not have streaming capabilities
- Repair warranty varies by product
- **No** loss and damage warranty

Prescription Hearing Aids

$1,800-$6,500 per pair*

- Programmed to your prescribed hearing loss by an audiologist
- Counseling on device care and maintenance
- Checks to determine benefit from hearing aids
- Streaming of audio and phone calls
- Repair warranty
- Loss and damage warranty
- Some are covered by health insurance

- Audiologist's expertise to ensure:
  - Hearing aids are programmed properly
  - Receiving maximum benefit

*varies based on technology level

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Are you ready for an OTC hearing aid?

Some things to consider

- Does my hearing loss fall into the mild to moderate range?
- Is the hearing loss in both ears and the same in both?
- Is my hearing issue complex?
- Can I handle technology on my own?
- Do I want assistance in person?

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Summary: OTC Hearing Aid Tips

Get tested to know if you are officially a candidate

Know the features

Read the warnings

Know your insurance coverage

Make sure device is labeled FDA approved

Give it time to adjust and try out

Engage an audiologist for assistance

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Free OTC Consultation

- CHC is offering a free 15 minute consultation to discuss candidacy for OTC hearing aids
- Our audiologists will answer any questions you may have about this new category of hearing aids
- To schedule a consultation, you can call 917-305-7921 or use this link https://www.chchearing.org/otc-hearing-aids

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Emotional Impacts of Hearing Loss

- Common experiences:
  - Social isolation
  - Dinner table syndrome
  - Limited empathy from others

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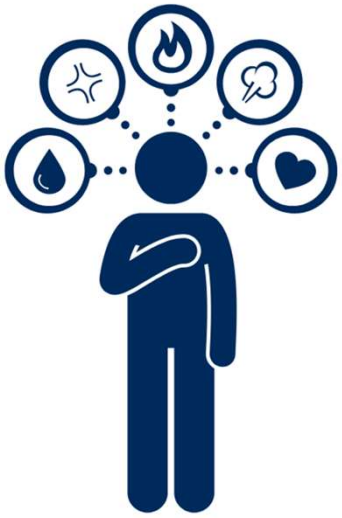
  - Chips away at self-esteem
  - Undermines confidence

- Range of emotions:
  - Frustration
  - Anger
  - Stress
  - Anxiety
  - Depression
  - Sadness



"I don't matter"
"It's all my fault"

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Living and Coping with Hearing Loss

- Be the author of your journey
- Turn the prism and discover new perspectives
- Build your connections
- Foster wellness
- Find purpose – be curious
- Embrace healthy thoughts – live through all the feelings
- Seek help

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CHC's Emotional Health and Wellness Services

- Weekly support group for individuals with hearing loss
  - Open to new participants

- Psychotherapy for individuals and couples

Reach out to Jeff Wax

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- 917-305-7739

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Thank you - Contact Us!

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