

FACTS OR FICTION?



HEARING
DISORDERS
SEPARATING
FACTS
FROM
FICTION



Although we live in the information age, there are still many misconceptions about hearing disorders, and about what hearing instruments can do to help.

One of the reasons is to be found in the general lack of public knowledge about hearing loss and how it affects individuals. Another explanation is that hearing instruments, just like computers, have come a very long way in just a few years, and are now able to do things that were unthinkable only 10 years ago.

So which commonly held beliefs are true - and which are simply out-of-date misconceptions?

This brochure aims to help you separate facts from fiction. It also tells you what to do if you, or someone you know, suffers from some degree of hearing loss.

FICTION

Hearing problems are rare

FACT

About 10% of the world's population has a hearing loss, and some 20% of the 40-60 age group.

FICTION

Hearing loss and wearing hearing instruments are signs of old age.

FACT

Hearing loss affects people of all ages. There are, in fact, more hearing-impaired people aged 45 to 64 than in the over-65 age group.

FICTION

People with impaired hearing are "slow", less intelligent, or even senile.

FACT

Hearing impairments are usually the result of a variety of hereditary, medical, social and environmental causes - especially exposure to noise. But there is no correlation to decreased intelligence. Unfortunately however, almost anyone who has difficulty communicating with others may be viewed as in some way less smart. Perhaps they are not able, for example, to contribute to discussions. Or they may constantly be one or a few steps behind in any conversation. All the more reason to wear a hearing instrument!



FICTION

If I were suffering from impaired hearing, I'd know about it.

FACT

Not necessarily. Most cases of hearing loss develop gradually. Our own built-in defenses may make it difficult for us to self-diagnose, and we have ways of compensating for a hearing loss without realizing it. A simple hearing test can determine if an impairment exists.

FICTION

My hearing loss is not bad enough for a hearing instrument.

FACT

Hearing losses and listening needs vary from individual to individual. Your hearing care professional can determine how much a hearing instrument will improve your hearing. Most people who get a hearing instrument, though, ask themselves why they didn't take action much earlier.

FICTION

When someone has a hearing loss, that just means that sounds are not loud enough.

FACT

Typically, hearing loss is not equal across pitches. This means that while voices of others may seem loud enough, some high-pitched speech sounds may be too soft to hear clearly, making speech sound muffled. Modern hearing instruments are fitted to take these factors into account. They amplify incoming sounds selectively - according to each individual hearing loss.

FICTION

I've heard that my type of hearing loss can't be helped.

FACT

More than 90% of individuals with hearing loss can be helped through amplification thanks to continuously emerging new technologies.

FICTION

Hearing instruments don't work. I've tried them.

FACT

That may be because you tried one of yesterday's products that simply don't compare with today's advanced digital hearing instruments. Or, perhaps your instruments didn't fit well, making them uncomfortable and obvious to others. Major technological efforts in recent years have focused on these problems and have in most cases provided effective solutions.



Hearing loss can also have a number of psychological effects including depression, withdrawal and loss of self-esteem.

Communication problems put strain on relationships at home and at work.

Putting off the inevitable will just make it more difficult to rectify the problem, and it may even make your hearing deteriorate faster. So the sooner you seek hearing help, the better.

FICTION

Hearing instruments are so clunky and unsightly that nobody wants to wear them.

FACT

The latest digital technology has made hearing instruments much smaller and more effective. Many can wear instruments that are hidden well inside the ear, or tucked behind the ear and covered by the wearer's hair.

FICTION

Hearing instruments can damage hearing.

FACT

A properly fitted and maintained instrument will not damage your hearing. In fact, regular hearing aid use can prevent deterioration of your brain's ability to interpret sounds.

FICTION

Hearing instruments can filter out distracting background noise.

FACT

Newer digital hearing instruments offer features such as directionality and noise reduction, which greatly reduce background noise.



FICTION

Digital hearing instruments aren't very different from analogue ones.

FACT

Digital technology provides many additional benefits and gives an optimal fit to each individual hearing loss. Digital instruments can also reduce unwanted sounds, such as background noise and feedback, while at the same time significantly enhancing the sounds we want to hear, such as speech.

FICTION

Really good hearing instruments are far too expensive.

FACT

Advanced digital hearing instruments are affordable, and well within the reach of most people. The real issue is quality of life - and what it's worth to you.

FICTION

Hearing instruments don't last long enough to justify the expense.

FACT

Successful users of hearing instruments typically wear them every day from the time they wake up until they go to bed at night. If cared for appropriately, hearing instruments can last several years.

FICTION

Hearing instruments will help me in any hearing situation.

FACT

While it's true that hearing instruments improve your overall hearing ability, they may not work for every situation. Some will do more for your hearing loss than others, depending on price and features.

FICTION

It's not necessary to get two hearing instruments; one will do just as well.

FACT

Binaural hearing (i.e. with two ears), is what helps us locate where sounds are coming from, and tell approximately how far away they are. Listening with two balanced ears also makes sounds louder and clearer than listening with only one ear. Age and noise-related hearing loss tends to affect both ears, which explains why about 75% of new purchasers choose two hearing instruments. Clinical studies report a higher level of satisfaction and better hearing in difficult listening situations.

FICTION

The invisible hearing instruments worn inside the ear canal are the best hearing instruments to purchase.

FACT

There are several styles of hearing instruments and all are available in "state-of-the-art" versions. What is most important is that you purchase a hearing instrument that accommodates your own individual hearing loss and your listening needs.



FICTION

Hearing tests are expensive and inconvenient.

FACT

Not so. Most medical insurance policies cover hearing tests with a physician's referral. Testing is quick and easy.

FICTION

I can save money by buying hearing instruments on-line or by mail order.

FACT

By working with a hearing care practitioner, you are purchasing professional care and service including appropriate evaluation, referral for medical treatment if and when necessary, instruction in how to use the hearing instrument, follow-up care and support, repair services, and rehabilitation services.

Remember, a hearing loss is more noticeable than a hearing instrument.

