

“One change was immediate,” exclaimed Aidan’s mother. “Suddenly I was dealing with people who really listened to our concerns and made it a priority to address them. Dr. Toth took control of the situation, which was a huge relief.”

– Andrea Zagarola, mother to Aidan, Dr. Toth’s patient at The Center for Audiology.

[READ MORE ABOUT Aidan INSIDE](#)

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FACES OF HEARING LOSS:
A mother’s quest to put her son on the path to a normal life. < READ THEIR STORY

FAQ YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED
Why is the hearing aid so misunderstood?



FALL/WINTER 2015

ListenUp!

YOUR GUIDE TO HEALTHIER HEARING AND IMPROVING YOUR LIFESTYLE

HEARING AIDS ARE AN IMPORTANT INVESTMENT:
Do you understand the price tag?

There’s no way around it – hearing aids are expensive. The high price tag is often a barrier to getting the help and relief hearing aids provide, but it doesn’t have to be. Hearing aids are an important purchase and it is crucial to think of how they’ll positively impact your quality of life as you’ll be wearing these devices most hours, during the day, seven days a week. When buying hearing aids, it’s essential to be sure the money and time spent is well worth it.

How much do hearing aids cost?

The purchase price of a single hearing aid is generally anywhere from \$1000 to \$4000 per ear, and most insurance providers do not cover this cost. The price of a hearing aid typically includes the consultation and fitting time, follow-up appointments, cleanings and a device warranty that can range from one to three years.

Why is there such a large range of pricing for hearing aids?

The main factor that affects the purchase price of the hearing aid is the level of technology. The more advanced the technology in a hearing aid, the more expensive the device. All hearing aids have a basic level of sound processing technology that will automatically adjust for sound coming in and account for your hearing loss. The more advanced hearing aids also have technology available for feedback reduction, solutions for hearing in noisy situations, wireless capabilities and other features to improve the listening experience.

Why do hearing aids cost so much?

Hearing aid pricing includes the cost of the device itself as well as the services of the professional. Much of the cost in manufacturing hearing aids is from the research needed to continue making technology advancements. Each year, hundreds of millions of dollars are spent by

the industry to improve how these devices perform. This investment back into research ultimately benefits the person with hearing loss.

When you purchase hearing aids, the price is part of a process that includes all of the professional services plus the ABC’s of hearing rehabilitation. Additional services at JFK include brain exercises to retrain the brain how to process sounds that you have been missing in the audible range and compensatory listening strategies to teach you to be a better listener. In addition, your hearing ability may change, your hearing aid may need repair and you may have questions from time to time that you need answered. You are making an investment in the entire rehabilitative process which includes not only the hearing aid technology but the solution also.

Here’s another way to think about the price of hearing aids. An average pair of hearing aids is \$5000 and they have a life expectancy of

(CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE)

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about five years. If you break it down, the hearing aids will cost you \$2.84 a day which is less than the cost of a mocha at your favorite coffee shop. In other words, while the initial amount sounds high, the ongoing usage price is reasonable.

When you consider the communication, relationship and health benefits that you get from wearing a hearing aid, most people agree that it is well worth it.

Why not buy hearing devices online, through mail order or at a big box store?

You can purchase hearing aids cheaply online that are worthless. The thing you don't usually get with online hearing devices is a professional fitting. If you needed a hip replacement, would you order the parts online and try to find a surgeon to implant it?

The Better Hearing Institute surveyed more than 2000 hearing aid users about their fitting experience and level of satisfaction. The outcome was straightforward: those users who were fit using a clinically validated hearing aid fitting protocol had greater satisfaction with their hearing aids and actually heard better!

Another finding in this survey was that a typical hearing aid user will need about three visits after purchase to get a hearing device properly adjusted, and some wearers will need more. You will not be able to get that type of service through the mail.

Specifically, of those hearing aid users who received a comprehensive clinical protocol:

81% would repurchase the same brand of hearing aids

99% were satisfied with the benefit they received from the hearing aids

Alternatively, when an incomplete fitting and adjustment method is used, such as what might be offered to those who order hearing aids from the internet:

14% would repurchase the same brand of hearing aids

12% were satisfied with the benefit they received from the hearing aids

Overall, when it comes time to invest in your hearing healthcare, remember you are not just purchasing a hearing aid you are purchasing professional services as part of a comprehensive hearing rehabilitation program. This purchase should be viewed as a long-term investment which includes fittings, auditory training, compensatory listening strategies, adjustments, maintenance and the chance to establish a relationship with your audiologist. In a nutshell: when hearing aids are fit with an appropriate, comprehensive protocol by an audiologist, you get more satisfaction and benefit from the hearing aids, which in the long run is well worth the financial investment.

FACES OF HEARING LOSS:

Aidan Zagarola: Audiology Program

Hearing loss afflicts more than 36 million Americans, and the number of young Americans with hearing loss has increased significantly since the mid-1990's. Nearly three out of every 1,000 children in the United States are born with a detectable level of hearing loss in one or both ears. At the JFK Johnson Rehabilitation Institute Center for Audiology, we provide hearing health and balance services to people of all ages. From our main office in Edison and our satellite office in Monroe, the Center for Audiology serves all of our area's hearing, balance, and communication needs through a two-pronged approach to professional services.

First, we offer the highest level of clinical expertise possible. Our staff of audiologists hold doctoral degrees in Audiology, are licensed by the state of New Jersey and hold Certificates of Clinical Competence from the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. We augment this professional talent with technical know-how that uses the most advanced technology and equipment available in the hearing healthcare field. Our objectives are to address the specific needs of each patient and to enhance the quality of life for the hearing-impaired person.

Andrea Zagarola experienced all the anxiety and concern that any mother would feel when her son Aidan didn't pass the newborn hearing screening and was found to be hearing impaired in both ears. Her anxiety and frustration built further when additional hearing tests yielded inconsistent results, and she couldn't get straight answers about Aidan's hearing problems. She was referred to a specialist in New York City, but still could not get answers, and had the additional inconvenience of traveling into the city.

When Aidan was 15 months old, the Zagarolas were connected with Dr. Virginia Toth, Manager of JRI's Audiology Center, one of the largest such programs in the region with eight licensed audiologists. Each audiologist has earned a clinical doctorate and has knowledge of the auditory system and how technology is used to assess and treat hearing problems in children and adults.

"One change was immediate," exclaimed Aidan's mother. "Suddenly I was dealing with people who really listened to

our concerns, and made it a priority to address them. Dr. Toth took control of the situation, which was a huge relief."

"They recommended a sedated hearing test to evaluate the cause of the hearing loss," remembered Mrs. Zagarola. "Initially we were concerned about sedation for someone as young as Aidan, but the team's confidence and focus calmed our concerns. We learned about the syndrome that had caused his hearing loss, from which they were able to develop a comprehensive treatment plan.

"When he was 17 months old, he got his first hearing aid," continued Mrs. Zagarola. "Aidan's hearing would fluctuate, so we had to go back regularly for adjustments and further testing. Everyone in the department knows us, and they've always been incredibly accommodating and warm. Dr. Toth stayed on top of everything, eventually counseling us on timing for a cochlear implant."

At the September 2014 40th Anniversary celebration of the JFK Johnson Rehabilitation Institute, Dr. Toth suggested that Aidan be one of the speakers at the event. Mrs. Zagarola introduced Aidan, and he spoke about his experience.

"That was a really special event for him, in what has otherwise turned into a very normal life" said Mrs. Zagarola. "He doesn't have any impediment when he speaks, and he's in a mainstream program at his elementary school. He plays soccer, baseball and swims, just like all the other kids. And it's all because of the tremendously skilled, smart and caring folks at the Center for Audiology at JFK."



 **JFK Johnson Rehabilitation Institute**
The Center for Audiology

FAQs about hearing aids

Pity the poor hearing aid. Although its satisfaction rate among users is more than 70 percent, they remain among the most misunderstood – and stigmatized – devices in the medical world today. There are approximately 25 million people that would benefit from their use, but won't wear them.

WHY? Some are afraid the devices make them look old. Others refuse to believe they have a hearing problem. Others don't believe they will improve their ability to hear because of an experience a friend or family member shared. Sound familiar? Maybe it's time to familiarize yourself with a few FAQs about hearing aids.

WHAT IS A HEARING AID? A hearing aid is a small electronic device worn behind the ear or in the ear canal.

It amplifies sound so that a person with hearing loss can hear sound better. Hearing devices have three components: a microphone, amplifier and speaker. Sound comes through the microphone and is converted into an electrical signal and sent to the amplifier. The amplifier increases the power of the signals and sends them to the ear through the speaker.

CAN HEARING AIDS IMPROVE MY HEARING? Hearing aids can improve your ability to hear for hearing loss that cannot be medically or surgically corrected.

WHAT SHOULD I LOOK FOR WHEN CHOOSING A HEARING AID? That depends on your lifestyle and your budget. An active person who enjoys traveling and athletic activities will most likely need a different level of technology than someone who spends most of their time at home watching television.

ASK THE AUDIOLOGIST

I feel isolated because of my hearing loss. How will hearing aids improve my quality of life?



It is proven that hearing aids can benefit you beyond just improving hearing. Hearing loss affects your social, emotional, psychological and physical well-being. We communicate to build relationships. When hearing loss is left untreated it causes isolation, the perception of not being "with it", or having emotional instability. If you are able to be involved in the conversation you have an increased sense of control over your life. Hearing aids will benefit you beyond just improving your hearing. Try a demonstration of amplification and hear what you have been missing. Get back into life!