

# *The Sounds You Hear on Hearing Aid*

**F**OR MORE than a dozen years I have been wearing a hearing aid. During this time numerous people have asked me about it, what kind, etc. Most admitted they were having trouble with their hearing and were looking for something to help.

There are many deaf people who can hear nothing. For every one of these there may be a hundred who can hear some things and miss other sounds. Hearings loss is partial but bothersome.

Devices have been improved immensely since I bought my first hearing aid, an amplifier that hung over the ear with a small tube connected to a plastic mold inside the ear. The second one was a "directional" hearing aid to improve clarity.

One was replaced because I left it in a shirt pocket and it went through the laundry. That isn't good for hearing aids.

The latest model is designed to be tuned separately for high and low sounds, making more accurate fitting possible. It is cased in a plastic

mold, entirely inside the ear.

One thing is certain. No hearing aid is equal to the normal human ear, a remarkable creation that can turn off unwanted sounds and picks up whispers at surprising distances.

Mechanical hearing aids aren't as selective. They pick up every noise around the wearer — the clatter of dishes, the din of other conversations in the room, the roar of the air conditioner, and sounds persons with normal hearing seldom notice. Clapping of hands in applause sounds much like popping firecrackers.

Undoubtedly, the most abusive device for people wearing hearing aids is the over-used and over-amplified public address system. People with only partial hearing efficiency often wonder how people with normal hearing can stand the noise.

Microphones frequently are used when not needed, especially by musicians. They may inflict a tinny quality to natural tones and excessive volume distorts music into ca-

caphony. Hearing aids seem to make these effects more noticeable.

Many people — perhaps most people — speak clearly and distinctly enough to be heard. Others fail to project their voices. Hearing aids help to pick up what they say.

As we move into the era when replacement or transplanting of internal body organs is becoming somewhat commonplace, we should be grateful for the science that makes it possible. The wearing of hearing aids seems to embarrass some people, but it should not any more than the wearing of eye glasses, dentures or hair pieces.

Hearing aids may have a slight advantage occasionally because they can be turned off and serve as a sort of ear plug. Wives sometimes accuse husbands of doing this, but because hearing loss usually is only partial it doesn't always work.

Another problem that hearing aids won't help is our inability to hear what someone else is saying if we are talking. We seldom learn much that way.

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Dear Ferdie - we know each other through the farm Club. There are probably a lot of people wearing aids that could benefit from the procedure described in the enclosed reprint. Dr Hough did my left ear in 1956 & right ear in 1966. My Dad had his done when he was pushing 80. How happy he was to hear birds sing & the train whistle, AGAIN

as I read your article I kept hoping that you'd mention this possible alternative for some people - should they be so fortunate.

Vic