Types of Hearing Aid Devices Offer You Many Choices by Crowin Smith

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Hearing aid devices amplify the sound and enables the user to percept speech and other sounds properly. The technology used in hearing devices have come a long way since Harley Fletcher invented the first hearing aid known as Body worn aids. Now there are several devices available which offers better comfort and efficiency than their earlier counterparts.

1. Behind the ear aids (BTE)

BTE is the cheapest and easiest to use among hearing aids. This comes with a case that is placed behind the ear and a tube that runs down to the ear mould. The amplifier is inside the case which routs the sound into the ear through the tube. Since, the case sits outside, BTE requires less frequent cleaning. BTE is available in different colors and shade to match with the skin.

Advancement in technology has now produced miniature BTEs which has thin hair like tubes which are less visible. It also uses a larger vent to keep the ear canal more open.

2. In the ear aids(ITE)

ITE devices are made to fit in the outer ear bowl. These are custom made devices for each individual and are sometimes visible while standing close to someone. Traditionally ITEs are recommended for children since these needed to be replaced frequently as the child grows. However the new ITEs made with silicon provides a solution to the problem.

3. Receiver In the Canal/Ear (CRT/RIC/RITE)

This is similar to the BTE with one significant difference. The receiver is placed in the ear canal and instead of the tune electrical wires are used. This device offers better reception of sound since it does not need to be routed in to the ear from an outside part. The RITE devices eliminate many limitations of the BIT.

4. In the canal (ITC), mini canal (MIC) and completely in the canal aids (CIC)

ITC devices are smaller and invisible since it fits inside the ear, but it is also more expensive because it needs to be custom made for each individual.

5. Invisible In canal hearing aids (IIC)

The IIC is the most comfortable among the several ear aid devices available. It sits deep in the ear canal making it invisible even when directly looking at the ear bowl. Since it is placed inside the ear, it gives a more natural experience of hearing. Furthermore in this aid, the ear canal is not blocked with a large shell.

6. Extended wear hearing aids

Extended wear hearing aids are placed inside the ear, with the help of a professional and is kept in the ear for 1-3 months continuously. These are probably the most comfortable aids since it avoids daily insertion, removal and cleaning. Also since the aid is placed near to the ear drum it gives a more clear and natural amplification of sounds.

7. Open-fit devices

Designed to mitigate the occlusion effect in other devices, OFT is similar to the BTE. It has a small case sitting outside the ear and a tube running into the ear ending.

8. Personal, User, Self, or Consumer Programmable

These new age devices allow the user to program the devices according to their own preferences using a PC. If an individual is unable to customize the settings, manufactures and dealer could do it remotely.

9. Disposable hearing aids

The battery in the Disposable hearing aids is non-replaceable. The device becomes useless once the battery runs out but the fact that the battery need not be recharged often makes it easy to use.

10. Bone anchored Hearing Aids (BAHA)

BAHA is a hearing instrument that needs to be surgically placed inside the skull. Children under the age 5 require wearing it outside on a head band. The device placed inside the skull vibrates the inside of the ear, stimulating the nerve fibres and allowing hearing.

The hearing aid devices are useful for individuals with mild, moderate and severe hearing loss. Recently, the advancement in technology has helped invent a number of devices that are more efficient and easy to use.

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