

Senior Living



Hearing Better for a Happier Life

According to the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders, about one in three people between the ages of 65 and 74 have hearing loss and nearly half of those older than 75 have difficulty hearing.

If you are experiencing a decline in how you hear, it may be time to invest in a hearing aid. There are several considerations you should make before committing to a certain model. Make sure to get your doctor's opinion on the option that is most efficient in your situation.

Here are some factors to consider before you begin shopping.

KEY FEATURES

Hearing devices typically consist of four basic components: a microphone, a processor, a receiver and a power source. The microphone recognizes the sounds you hear and transfers them to the processor.

Those sounds are enhanced by the processor, which then amplifies them to your ear canal via the receiver, or speaker. The system is powered by a power source, or battery.

While most operate the

same, you can find units with other high-tech features. Here are some to look for.

- Automatic gain control picks up on soft sounds while maintaining loud noises at comfortable levels.
- A feedback manager is helpful to minimize annoying whistling, while boosting amplification.
- Noise reduction is great for reducing background noise so

you can concentrate on speech intelligibility.

SET REASONABLE EXPECTATIONS

A hearing aid won't completely restore your hearing, so it's important to understand what you should expect.

Most users experience a better quality of life by picking up on sounds they couldn't hear in the past and enjoying con-

versations without asking someone to repeat themselves.

You also should allow yourself time to adjust to the new type of hearing experience. There may be a short period before you feel comfortable with your new earpiece and its capabilities.

ASSISTIVE LISTENING DEVICE

In addition to a hearing aid,

take advantage of assistive listening devices that can make an aid more effective. Installing wireless systems or neck loops in rooms in which you have difficulty hearing can make the sounds more prevalent to someone with a hearing aid.

Before making a purchase, check with your insurance policy to see if they help cover the cost. Some high-end models can be expensive.



© ADOBE STOCK

Flying in Comfort

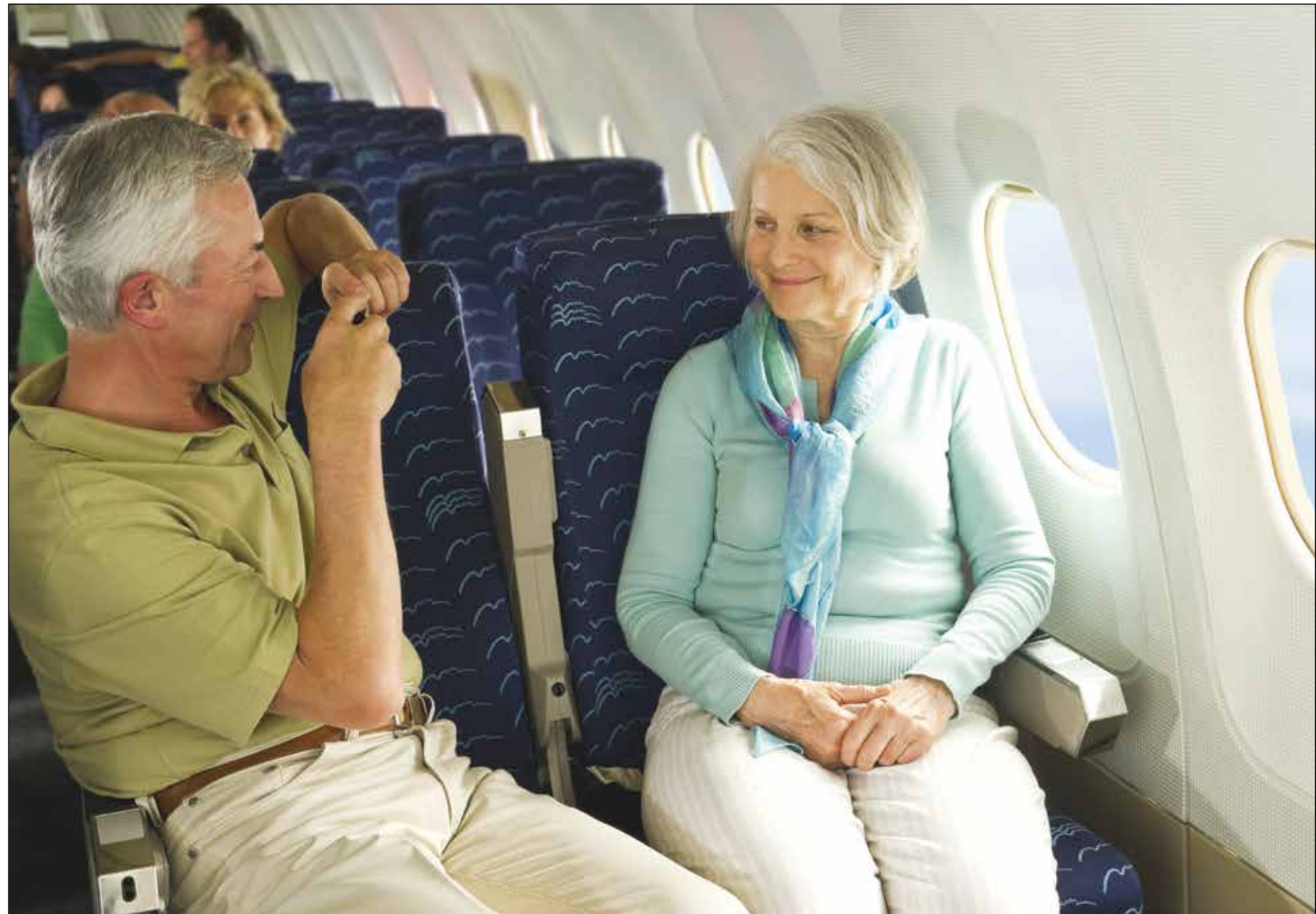
If you are retired or approaching retirement, you may be planning to do your fair share of traveling. Sometimes, flying seems like too much of a chore to entertain, but driving long distances can be just as difficult. Don't let your fear of being uncomfortable in flight stop you from seeing the world.

Half the struggle of flying occurs before you even enter the plane. Navigating huge airports while hauling luggage can take a toll on your body. Before traveling, consider investing in suitcases with high-quality wheels to make walking more comfortable.

Check out these other helpful tips to enjoy your flight, from the experts at Parent Giving.

PRE-FLIGHT PLANNING

Packing lightly for your flight will lessen the strain you feel when boarding. Try to show up early so you have plenty of time to check all your baggage before waiting in line. Only bring along the necessities you will require while you're in the air.



© ADOBE STOCK

You should also wear comfortable clothing and shoes, since you may expect to be standing in lines for long durations. Don't forget to request an aisle seat that provides easy access to the bathroom and allows you to get up to stretch during a flight.

BRING MEDICATION

Remember to bring the medication your body needs

to remain healthy. It's important to receive a doctor's note before your flight as it may raise questions when you are going through security. Without a note, you may experience delays or worse, have your prescriptions confiscated.

It's also important to prepare an in-flight medication schedule, especially when crossing multiple time zones. You will want to make sure you

stick to your body's schedule, not what the clock says.

TRAVEL AIDS

Sitting still for long periods of time can wreak havoc on our comfort level. Pack noise-reduction headphones to make the environment more suitable for a power nap or a peaceful experience to enjoy a book.

Items to prevent becoming

sore include compression stockings, which can reduce the risk of blood clots if you are on an extremely long flight.

BRING SNACKS

Plan for delays or reroutes by bringing a suitable selection of food. This is especially important if you suffer from a disease like diabetes or eating is required after taking certain medications.



© ADOBE STOCK

The Importance of Good Sleep

A good night's sleep affects much more than how you feel the next day. With age, it's not uncommon for sleep habits to change. Most seniors notice they are ready to fall asleep earlier in the evening and wake up at later hours.

As we age, our bodies produce less melatonin, which can lead to slight disruptions throughout the night. However, if you experience disturbed

sleep, are tired when you wake up or experience other aspects of insomnia, there may be serious underlying issues.

Learn more information regarding your sleeping patterns and if you should visit a specialist, from the American Geriatrics Society.

COMMON SLEEP PROBLEMS IN SENIORS

Problems with sleep can lead to numerous issues for older adults. Here are a few of the most common types they experience.

Insomnia: a condition which causes you not to fall asleep when you think you should, causes you to stay asleep or gives the feeling you have not slept enough once you wake up.

Sleep apnea: a condition that may cause seniors to stop breathing during sleep. A lack of oxygen causes some to wake up gasping for air. This condition may lead to diseases such as high blood pressure and heart conditions.

Restless Leg Syndrome: a condition that causes people to repetitively kick their legs during sleep. While it may not wake you up, it's likely your legs will be sore in the morning and it will affect your comfort and ability to rest.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Your actions throughout the day can play a huge role in how well you sleep. Take the advice from the group Health in Aging to set yourself up for a full night's rest.

- Avoid caffeine, tobacco and alcohol in the later part of the day;
- Eat smaller portions before bedtime;
- Follow a strict sleep schedule and routine; and
- Exercise regularly, especially early in the day.

REACH OUT FOR HELP

If you have tried to make yourself tired and are still having difficulty sleeping, visiting a specialist is the next step. Through tests and studies, they can find what is keeping you awake.

They may choose cognitive-behavioral therapy, medical management or sometimes prescription medicine to help you get a better night's sleep.

Protect Yourself from Extreme Heat

With warmer temperatures on the horizon in most areas of the country, now is the time to prepare your home and body.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more people in the United States die from extreme heat than earthquakes, hurricanes, lightning, floods and tornadoes combined.

With age, our bodies become less able to cool down when temperatures are extreme. Fortunately, there are several proactive steps seniors can take to keep themselves safe this summer.

Don't underestimate the impact heat can have on your health. Remember these tips as the temperatures increase.

AIR-CONDITIONING INSPECTION

Before the heat is in full force, have a certified HVAC service analyze the integrity of your air-conditioning system. Ensuring it will perform when you need it most is good peace of mind.

They will test it and perform preventative maintenance so it's running in peak condition.

If your AC system breaks down in the middle of the summer, you may face delays before a specialist can make repairs as it is the busy sea-



© ADOBE STOCK

son. If you should find yourself in this situation, have a back-up plan to stay with a loved one or an emergency fund to check into a hotel until the unit is fixed.

REMAIN HYDRATED

A key to keeping safe during the summer is to stay hydrated. Drinking plenty of

water is always important but especially crucial during the heat. If you find yourself outside for extended periods, be sure to take numerous sips, not just when you're thirsty, as thirst isn't a good indicator of hydration.

Signs to look for include headache, muscle cramps and dry mouth or tongue. If

these symptoms persist, it's important to seek medical attention before they become worse.

BUDDY SYSTEM OR CAREGIVER

Call on a friend or loved one to check in on you every few hours during days of extreme heat. You will have

peace of mind that if something goes wrong, you will have someone looking out for you.

If you need more constant care, consider hiring an in-home caretaker. They can help ensure you are remaining hydrated and determine if the heat is beginning to affect your health.

Skin Cancer Awareness

The Skin Cancer Foundation reports the odds of developing skin cancer rise as you age.

In fact, about 50 percent of Americans who live to age 65 will have experienced at least one type of skin disease. Before enjoying the summer outdoors, don't skimp on the sunscreen.

WHAT IS SKIN CANCER

This type of cancer develops in one of the tissues in the skin. When caught early, most instances are considered minor problems and are easily removed. However, if left unresolved, they can lead to a fatal disease.

Regular annual checkups are encouraged by the American Geriatrics Society. They report that more than 2 million cases of skin cancer are discovered annually in the United States.

There are three common types that experts look for during examinations.

- **Basal cell carcinoma:** The most common type in the country, starts in the outer layer of the skin and slowly grows in its original location without spreading;

- **Squamous cell cancer:** Developed from flat squamous surfaces on the skin, it is commonly caused by exposure from the sun. It's more likely to spread than basal cell but chances are still relatively



© ADOBE STOCK

low; and

- **Melanoma:** This is the most dangerous form of skin cancer, which often spreads to important parts of the body. It occurs by affecting specialized cells in the skin that produce melanin. If caught early, 97 percent of melanomas can be cured, but it becomes more difficult to treat in later stages.

PROTECTING YOURSELF

The most important thing to do to lessen the risk of skin cancer is to avoid staying out in the sun. When going outdoors, wear long-sleeved shirts and pants when temperatures permit. During sunny days, make sure to liberally apply sunscreen with a UPF of 30 or higher on exposed skin.

Don't forget to reapply sunscreen after every few hours if you will be outside for long durations.

TREATMENTS

If you find yourself diagnosed with skin cancer, a specialist may offer different treatment methods based on its severity.

Sometimes surgical

extraction can be performed to easily remove the growth. For early cases, an incision usually eradicates the disease. However, for more advanced stages, extensive surgery may be required to eliminate deeper lesions.

Serious cases which have spread may require chemotherapy and radiation to shrink or eliminate the cancer.

Vacation with Grandchildren

Taking your grandchildren with you on a vacation is a wholesome experience for the entire family. Whether it's a cruise, camping trip or visiting an amusement park, the journey will help build the bond you have.

Plan to bring the little ones along for the adventure of your lives.

If you haven't spent an extended time alone with your grandchildren, a trial run before you invest in an expensive trip is important. Talk with their parents about any nighttime issues their children may have, such as nightmares, trouble sleeping or incontinence. While remaining close to home, invite them over for an overnight or weekend visit.

If all goes well, plan your trip but don't forget to listen for the kiddos' input. This vacation is just as much for them. Here are some other considerations you should make before leaving for vacation.

FOLLOW MOM AND DAD'S RULES

While you may not be familiar with asking your children for permission, it's respectful to ensure you are following wishes regarding their kids.



© ADOBE STOCK

Ask about any special instructions they have about their behavior and how to resolve it. For instance, if a child talks back or tries to act out, you should know how to keep punishments consistent. It's important to have your grandchildren's respect so they don't test their limits and bring this misbehavior home.

WHERE WILL YOU GO?

Consider talking with a local

travel agent to find a combination tour tailored to grandparents and their grandchildren. These specialized trips will give the entire group a chance to socialize with peers of the same age from all over the world.

Booking a rental property nearby favorite tourist locations is another good idea. These condos are usually less expensive than staying at hotels for a few nights, plus

they offer enough room to give everyone their own space.

Camping is another experience to share with your grandchildren. You can teach them the value of nature and show them useful skills such as fire building, outdoor cooking and fishing.

WHAT SHOULD YOU BRING?

In addition to luggage and supplies you'll need for your

vacation, you also should bring a few special documents along. Get notarized letters from the parents giving their permission for you to travel with the children and one giving permission for you to make decisions about medical care. You'll also want copies of the children's medical and dental insurance cards. Hopefully these forms will stay in your suitcase, but it's best to be prepared for issues.



© ADOBE STOCK

7 Healthy Habits for Seniors

If your age is catching up to you, there may be some lifestyle changes you can make to give you a boost in energy and better overall health.

Try to incorporate a few of these healthy habits, recommended by Parent Giving, to feel better and live longer.

QUIT SMOKING

Smoking tobacco can cause cancer, stroke and heart failure. It also affects your skin by causing excessive wrinkling weakening skin elasticity.

If you're having difficulty quitting cold turkey, try cutting back with the aid of nicotine gum or patches.

STAY ACTIVE

You should do something that boosts your strength, flexibility and balance. Participate in activities that help you stay at a healthy weight to prevent heart issues, sleep better and reduce stress.

EAT WELL

The right diet will make it easier to remain active. Schedule an appointment with a nutritionist to find the eating plan that will benefit you the most. Dietary changes and exercise can prevent or control illnesses such as heart disease, obesity, high blood

pressure and diabetes.

MAINTAIN A HEALTHY WEIGHT

Carrying around excessive weight is dangerous for your heart and promotes diseases such as diabetes. Find out what your ideal weight is for your body type and work to achieve it. You can maintain it by staying active and eating right.

PREVENT FALLS

Analyze your home for fall risks and eliminate them. Things such as loose carpets or rugs, cluttered walkways and unlit hallways should all be addressed. According to the National Council on Aging, falls are the leading cause of fatal and non-fatal injuries for older Americans. In most cases,

they can be easily avoided.

STAY UP-TO-DATE ON IMMUNIZATIONS AND SCREENINGS

Staying on top of your health is crucial, especially as you age. Follow your doctor's orders and receive the immunizations and life-saving screening schedule they provide to watch for serious health problems.

MANAGE STRESS

Try to limit the amount of stress you put yourself through. Exercising and meditation have shown to relieve pent-up frustration. You also should make time to socialize with friends and peers, as positive thinking has beneficial effects on our health.