

### Products to help when you're out and about

Trying to communicate in noisy places, from shops to restaurants to airports, can be very difficult if you have hearing loss. We don't want you to miss out on key information – or cracking conversations, so here's the lowdown on products that can help when you're out and about.

#### Induction loop systems

Induction loop systems help people with a hearing loss pick up speech sounds more clearly. It can be used when there is a lot of background noise or if the person you are trying to hear is far away (on the stage when watching a play) or behind a screen like a teller at the bank or post office. They'll work in a particular area if your hearing aids are switched to the 'T' setting (or loop program). By doing this you're focusing on sounds – such as a person speaking – from the loop system microphone, rather than the internal hearing aid microphone, which amplifies **all** noises in the area.

#### Remote microphone

You'll find a remote microphone helpful if you're having a one-to-one conversation in a noisy area. Just place it close to the speaker and the sound it picks up will be transmitted straight into your hearing aids. Some remote microphones are also designed to pick up sounds from all around when placed in the centre of a group. You use a remote control or, in some models, an app to control them. You can control the sound you want to hear and adjust the speech and background-noise levels to suit you.

#### FM systems

FM systems are similar to remote microphones but they use radio waves to transmit sounds, so several people can pick up the same signal from one transmitter. This makes them suitable for group tours or conferences and lectures, as the speaker doesn't have to carry around several microphones. To receive an FM signal into your hearing aids, you will need an FM receiver attached to the hearing aid with a program set to pick up this signal.

#### Bluetooth streamers

Bluetooth streamers not only allow you to channel the audio of a Bluetooth device straight into your hearing aids, they also allow you to control the sound of your hearing aids. This means that you can personalize the sound settings easily, depending on where you are. They also connect to assistive devices, like remote microphones, allowing you to control the sound picked up from that as well. You can also use your smartphone or tablet as a remote microphone to send sound to your hearing aids.

## Hearing aid apps

Most hearing aids can be controlled via a smartphone app when connected to a Bluetooth streamer. Some newer phones, known as Made for iPhone (MFi) hearing aids, can be connected directly to smartphones and controlled through an app without using a streamer.

## Apps

Other smartphone apps can also help make accessing services and entertainment easier. To find out more visit our Apps page.

## Visiting restaurants

**Hearing loss shouldn't be a barrier to you enjoying eating and drinking out in cafés, pubs and restaurants.**

## Planning your visit

To find out whether an establishment is suitable for you, check its website before you go.

There should be a range of contact options, such as telephone, email, a web form, or the possibility of visiting in person. This can help you to answer any questions about the suitability of the venue and to book, if necessary, in advance of your visit.

When enquiring about the venue, you may wish to ask whether:

- music is played – and if so, what type and how loud
- a quiet area, or quiet tables, are available, away from speaker systems and other noise sources
- there are any tables with hearing loop systems available
- the furnishings include any of the following, which can help diminish background noise: tablecloths, carpets, soft surfaces or acoustically-treated products
- the lighting makes it possible to lipread

## Visiting museums and galleries

**With equipment to help and accessible events, hearing loss shouldn't prevent you from making the most of a visit to a museum or gallery.**

## Planning your visit to a museum or gallery

Before your visit, check the museum or gallery website for information about accessibility. Some museums and galleries have hearing induction loops or infrared systems at the information and ticket desks that can help you to hear sound more clearly over background noise.

## How do I use a hearing loop system?

If you use hearing aids, set them to the hearing loop setting (formerly the 'T' setting). If your hearing aids don't have this setting, speak to your audiologist – they may need to activate it for you. If you don't have hearing aids, you can use a hearing loop with a loop-listening device, which will send the sound directly to your ears through headphones or earphones.

## What else can help me enjoy museums and galleries?

### Exhibitions

Check ahead of your visit what facilities are available to help you enjoy exhibitions. You may wish to find out whether there are:

- audio guides available for the exhibition with volume enhancement
- exhibition videos and films that have subtitles and transcripts
- transcripts of audio guides that you can use

### Events

If you'd like to go to a museum or gallery event, check ahead to see what assistance is provided if you are deaf or have hearing loss.