

Student Academy of Audiology

Happy New Year!
This month, we'll be addressing the differences between several types of hearing devices.



Types of hearing devices

Over-the-counter hearing aids

• What we know:

- The Over-the-Counter Hearing Aid Act was passed in the summer of 2017. Under this Act, the U.S Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is able to create and regulate a new category of OTC for the purpose of making hearing devices more affordable and available. At this time, OTC hearing aids do not exist in the U.S and consumers can only purchase a hearing aid from a licensed professional (audiologist or hearing aid dispenser) after completing a series of hearing tests that determine the type and degree and degree of hearing loss. Upon the release of official guidelines, consumers will be able to purchase a hearing device on their own without the need of a prescription or medical oversight. The FDA is working to establish guidelines and is set to release a set of rules and regulations soon. [Learn more about OTC hearing aids!](#)

• What devices qualify as over-the-counter hearing aids?

- The Academy recommends that devices should be described in a way that consumers can distinguish them from FDA regulated medical devices (hearing aids). They should also be labeled for use by adults over 18 years old. OTC hearing aids should assure that the output of the devices do not exceed levels that could potentially cause additional hearing loss or cause hearing loss for normal hearing individuals. [Learn more about Academy guidelines on OTC devices!](#)

• Are OTC hearing aids an affordable solution?

- OTC hearing aids may come at a lower cost, but they are a one-size-fits-all solution to an often nuanced issue. If consumers do not know the degree of their hearing loss, the hearing device may not benefit their hearing loss and may damage their hearing if used incorrectly. [Learn more about OTC hearing aids!](#)

Personal Sound Amplification Products (PSAPs)

PSAPs are electronic devices designed to amplify sounds in certain environments and situations. They provide limited increase in audibility in specific settings where listening may be difficult (restaurants). While they are not regulated by the FDA, they do provide a minimal degree of amplification. However, they are not intended for the treatment of hearing loss. Consumers may obtain PSAPs through an audiologist, online or retailers. [Learn more about PSAPs!](#)



Personal Sound Amplification Product (PSAP)

Hearables

Hearables are ear-level consumer electronic devices that offer wireless connectivity via bluetooth. While they provide minimal amplification in certain listening environments, they are not intended for treating hearing loss. They are not regulated by the FDA but do come at a low cost and are easily accessible. Wearers should be advised that these types of devices may cause cerumen impaction and damage to hearing if not worn properly. [Learn more about hearables!](#)

Some models have an amplification feature. For instance: the AirPods Pro released by Apple in 2019 include a feature called transparency mode, where if fit properly, can be used via external microphones to amplify sounds around the user ([Apple, 2021](#)).



Apple AirPods Pro

In recent news ...

• Noisy Toys List 2020

- In early December, The Sight and Hearing Associations released its annual Noisy Toys list. Every year, they report on toys that exceed or come close to, the National Institute of Occupational Health and Safety's 85 dB cutoff value for mandatory hearing protection. This year, 14 out of the 24 toys assessed exceeded the 85 dB cutoff. At the top of the list, *Little Baby Bongo Drums by The Learning Journey* was reported at 105.5 dB when measured at 0 inches and 89.7 dB when measured at 10 inches. To read more about this year's Noisy Toys List and obtain access to the full list of toys reported, visit the [Sight & Hearing Association](#).



The Learning Journey Little Baby Bongo Drums

AAA 2021 Virtual

This year, AAA 2021 Virtual will be taking place from April 14-16.

- The event offers two and a half days of educational content, networking activities, gamification and expo hall connections. [Registration](#) opened on Monday, January 18 and the first 1,000 people to register will receive either a \$10 Starbucks Amazon egift card! To receive text alerts about AAA 2021 Virtual, text "AAA21" to 797979.



SAA Virtual 2021

The SAA Conference 2021 Virtual, generously sponsored by Starkey, will take place the Wednesday of AAA 2021 Virtual.

- This event is completely separate from AAA 2021 and requires separate registration. It is open to all audiology students (members and nonmembers) for the price of \$20. Click here to [register](#).

Want more information?

Have suggestions or concerns?

Contact the New York SAA State Ambassador!

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