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Diary of a Mad Hearing Aid User

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OK, Doc, I'm doing what you suggested. (I know you're not a doctor, but it's easier to say "*Hey Doc*" than "*Hey AuD*".) I'm writing down notes and questions about my hearing aid experiences, for our next visit. I kept a diary all through my teens, so you might get more than you expected.

Today was D-Day, or maybe I should say it was HA-Day, the day I got my first hearing aids.

Or maybe even HA-HA-Day, because I have one for each ear — and because it still feels like a big joke, me wearing hearing aids at 53 years old. Yeah, very funny. Who knew I was missing so much? My husband says *he* knew.

Day 1

11 am: Just got home. Don't know if I should admit this, but after leaving your office and driving 2 miles, I pulled over. It was all too much – these ear intruders, the cost, the noise. I didn't want to drive while I was sobbing, so I took the hearing aids out, to start again when I got home.

1 pm: Still haven't put them in. Sitting at my kitchen table, staring at them. With a magnifying glass. Sheesh, they're small. How could something so small cost so much?

2 pm: OK, I put them in again. Actually, I put the left one in *twice*, because it dropped out the first time. I was nervous or I put it in wrong. But now I'm committed to wearing these babies until I go to bed!

7 pm: Bedtime. It's been quite the day and these last five hours have been loud. LOUD! Have to clean them now, like I'm supposed to. First I had to decide where to keep the cleaning kit, a place where I'm sure to see it every night. Decided on the wine rack.

7:20 pm: Boy, am I tired, but this cleaning procedure took some time. Couldn't figure out all the teensy black instruments. I mean, why a little brush? It's not like the hearing aid has *fur*. And the long thing, the eeny-weeny riding whip? Do I stick it inside the hearing aid?! Hang on, I'll check the instruction book.

7:30 pm: Finally done, although they weren't too dirty, it's only been a day. I am so totally exhausted.

Day 2

9 am: I slept in. To be honest, I just didn't want to get up and put those things back in. I don't want to be hard of hearing, period.

10 am: They're in, finally. I had my coffee and then a shower and then waited a half hour for my ear canals to dry…I'm sure I read somewhere you're supposed to do that.

Noon: I don't think I can handle all this noise. At lunch with my husband, the knives and forks sounded like a sword fight. And there's just too much information! His nose whistles. I can hear

myself chewing and swallowing. I think I'd rather be deaf.

2 pm: Have serious concerns about how these *look*. The pulley things stick out at right angles from my head. I cannot go out in public looking like a Martian. I need to take them out and lie down and think about this.

3 pm: Whoa, that ding-dingy *Hello, hearing aid user!* chime thing is getting on my nerves. Is it supposed to remind me that I'm putting hearing aids in my ears? Seriously, what *else* would it be?

11 pm: Made it to my normal bedtime. Put the wine away, cleaned my hearing aids, and put them in the dry aid. Feeling better about all this.

Midnight: Husband woke me up. He heard a sound coming from the dry aid. Shit! I forgot to open the battery cage and one of them was making feedback noise. I hope nothing was damaged. Or maybe I do.

Day 3

7 am: Dropped one again. The cat and I both pounced for it, but I won. Wasn't worried about the hearing aid, but the cat might choke.

6 pm: I wore them all day. All *painful* day. My ears hurt—not sure if it's from the noise or from these foreign bodies in my ears.

11 pm: Watched TV tonight with husband who said how nice it was not to have the volume so loud. I think he meant to be encouraging, but I started to cry. So did he.

Day 4

Day 4 was OK, except for having to ask everyone to lower their voices. My friend said she was already whispering and couldn't go any lower. I said thank you for the support, that wasn't funny. She said, yes it was and to lighten up. I said wait till you lose *your* hearing, you insensitive cow. Then we both started to laugh, which sounded good.

Yesterday was a better day. My husband enjoys telling me what sounds I'm hearing. Seriously, I didn't know our mattress creaks so loudly. Husband said it wasn't that bad when the kids still lived at home. Not sure if I believe him; I'll have to figure out how to ask my son about this when he comes to visit.

Here are other questions for tomorrow's appointment:

- How long do hearing aid batteries last?
- I'm worried that the hearing aid is loud enough to cause more hearing loss.
- Tell me more about the telecoil in my hearing aids.
- Am I a good speech reader?
- How do I tell people about my hearing loss?
- Fix the Martian thing.

Not bad for the first week of the rest of my life with hearing aids, hey Doc?

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