

Q. Does the information in this brochure apply to cochlear implants also?

A. Cochlear implants are not regulated by the FCC and therefore are not rated. However, devices rated for HAC may make it more likely that a cochlear implant user will be able to use a cell phone with minimal interference either on the M or T setting. The same rule of thumb applies though – try before you buy.

Try before you buy.

It's best to try several phones before making your purchase to find the best match with your hearing aid.

Q. Are devices rated for HAC more expensive than devices without hearing aid compatibility?

A. No, the range of features and functions of wireless devices will impact the price, but hearing aid compatibility will not. Service provider owned and operated stores will offer a range of devices with varying features and prices.

Q. I already have a wireless device. May I trade it in for a hearing aid compatible device?

A. You will need to consult with your service provider.

Q. What if I cannot find a wireless device that works with my hearing aid?

A. You can check with your hearing healthcare professional to determine if there is a hearing aid option for you that may work better with wireless devices. Some telecoil users may find that accessories such as neckloops may further assist with their use of wireless devices.

Q. How can I be “hands free” while using my wireless device?

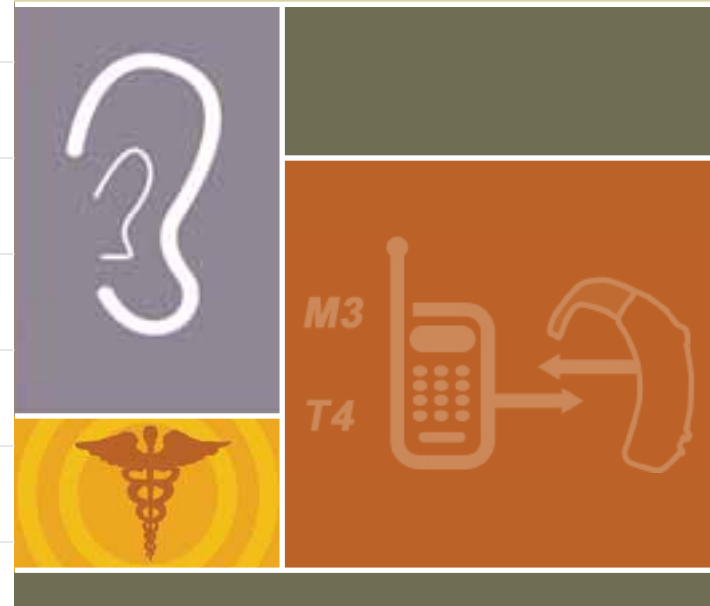
A. Many states now require “hands free” driving while using wireless devices. If you use a telecoil, you may be able to use a neckloop. If you use the microphone mode in your hearing aid, you may be able to use the speaker phone function available on some wireless devices. If there is a Bluetooth accessory for your hearing aid, it may be able to work with Bluetooth enabled wireless devices. Remember safety first while driving.

Resources for Consumers

Many people and organizations contribute to ensuring accessible communication is equally available for all individuals with disabilities, including consumers who have a hearing loss.

For more information

Visit <http://www.accesswireless.org> or <http://www.phonescoop.com> (show all options).



Hearing Aid Compatibility with Wireless Phones and Services

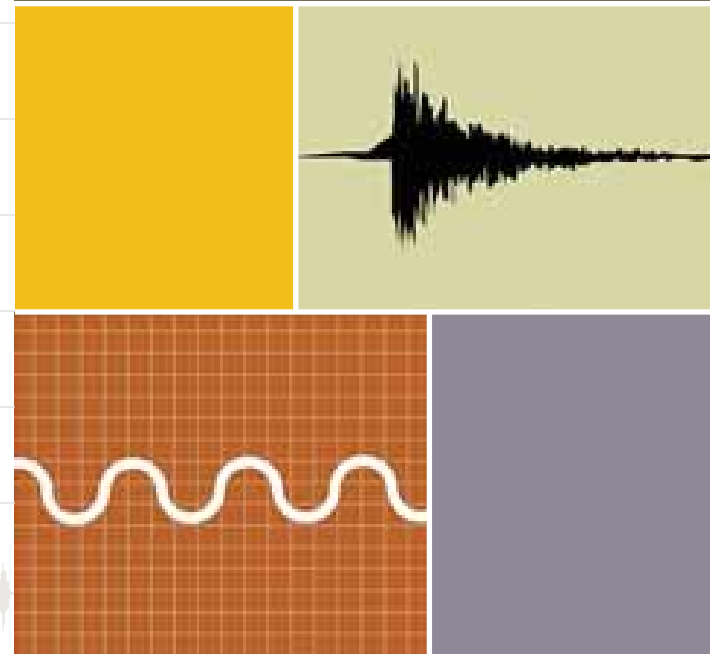
www.AccessWireless.org

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CTIA–The Wireless Association®
and

ATIS Hearing Aid Compatibility Incubator

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Hearing Aid Compatibility with Wireless Phones and Services

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What does hearing aid compatibility (HAC) mean for wireless devices (e.g., Cell Phones and PDAs)?

A. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) defines HAC for wireless devices in terms of two parameters; radio-frequency (RF) emissions and telecoil coupling. Cell phones are tested to see if they comply with the FCC's definition of hearing aid compatibility.

Q. How will I know if a wireless device is rated for HAC?

A. Information about whether a wireless device is rated for HAC can be found in three places: 1) on the display cards next to devices in service provider operated retail stores, 2) on the packages containing wireless devices, and 3) in the product's manual or packaging insert. The packages and display cards will be labeled with an "M" and/or "T" and a rating number. Only devices that are rated for HAC will be labeled in this way. If you see an "M3", "M4 T4" or "T3" label on the display card or packaging then the device is HAC compliant. If you have questions about the rating of a wireless device, ask the service provider or device manufacturer for more information.

Q. What does an "M3" or "M4" on the label mean?

A. "M" refers to the device's RF emissions level, and means the device is intended for use with hearing aids in microphone mode. The higher the "M" rating number on the device, the more likely you will be able to use the device with your hearing aid on the microphone setting.

Q. What does a "T3" or "T4" on the label mean?

A. "T" refers to the device's telecoil coupling ability, and means the device is intended for use with hearing aids in telecoil mode. The higher the "T" rating number on the device, the more likely you will be able to use the device with your hearing aid on the telecoil setting.

Q. What is a telecoil?

A. A telecoil is a small device that is built into some hearing aids for use with the telephone as well as assistive listening devices. To use the telecoil, generally either the hearing aid is switched to the "T" position or a button on the hearing aid is pushed to select the telecoil program. Some newer hearing aids will automatically switch to telecoil mode when using a phone. The telecoil picks up magnetic fields generated by telephones and converts these fields into sound. Telecoils are particularly useful for telephone communication because they permit the volume control of a hearing aid to be turned up without creating feedback or "whistling," and background noise can be reduced especially when using cell phones in noisy places. To determine whether your hearing aid contains a telecoil and how it is activated, ask your hearing health professional.

Q. What does hearing aid compatibility (HAC) mean for hearing aids?

A. Using the same measurement standard that wireless devices use to test for HAC, hearing aids can also be tested and rated for compatibility. This standard measures and rates the hearing aid's immunity to the typical electromagnetic outputs from wireless devices. An M1 or T1 is the poorest immunity rating, and an M4 or T4 is the best immunity rating. Your hearing healthcare professional may assist you in determining if your hearing aid has been rated.

Q. How do I know if my hearing aids will work with a particular cell phone?

A. If your hearing aid is rated for HAC like many wireless devices are, then there is a method for prediction: just add the rating of your hearing aid to the rating of the wireless device. A hearing aid rated M2 and a wireless device rated M3 combine to give an M rating of 5 and would likely provide "normal" use. An M rating combination of 6 would likely provide "excellent performance". The same would be true of T ratings. The higher the combination, the better the user experience is likely to be. Every individual's hearing loss is unique so ratings do not guarantee performance.

Q. Are there wireless devices I can use with my hearing aid on the telecoil setting?

A. Quite possibly. The FCC requires that wireless devices be rated for HAC specifically for hearing aids in telecoil mode. These devices are labeled with ratings of T3 or T4.

Q. Do the HAC ratings guarantee that I will be able to use a cell phone with my hearing aid?

A. Wireless devices that are rated for Hearing Aid Compatibility (HAC) should improve usability for hearing aid users. However, because of the highly individualized nature of hearing loss and hearing aids there is no guarantee.

Q. May I try a wireless device before I buy it?

A. Yes, it is advisable to try a wireless device with your hearing aid in the store before making a purchase. It's best to try several devices before buying to find the best match with your hearing aids. Visit a full service carrier store and ask to try devices that have been designated as "hearing aid compatible."

Q. Can I return a phone if it does not work for me after purchase?

A. It depends on the return policy. Be sure to understand the return policy, as well as, any early termination fees before signing up for any cell phone or service. Since a cell phone's RF emissions can change depending on your location, be sure to fully evaluate your listening experience outside the store during the return period.

Q. Who manufactures wireless devices that have been approved as HAC by the FCC?

A. All major handset manufacturers are required to offer HAC-compliant devices and may also offer hands-free accessories to improve usability.

Q. Do HAC compliant wireless devices look any different from other devices?

A. No.