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BY THE NUMBERS

One of the most important characteristics of a hearing instrument is the number of “frequency channels” it has. Sounds are processed and amplified by a hearing instrument on the basis of their frequencies and volumes. The hearing specialist refers to the wearer’s audiogram to tell which frequencies need amplification. Thus, the more frequency channels a hearing instrument has, the better able the hearing specialist will be to fine tune the hearing instrument. However, more is not necessarily better. While some hearing instruments come with more than 20 channels, wearers don’t always benefit from the extra channels (and higher cost). The hearing specialist can help hearing-instrument users make the determination of how many frequency channels they need to maximize speech audibility.

TIP OF THE WEEK

Research reveals that 6 to 8 channels are sufficient to provide the appropriate amount of amplification for most hearing losses. When choosing hearing instruments, you will need to discuss many factors with your audiologist, including but not limited to style, technology, and price points.

P.S. An audiogram is a graphic representation of a hearing test, which determines the softest sound that the tested individual can hear at each specific frequency (pitch).

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