

**Q:** I currently wear hearing aids and have heard about FM systems. What is an FM system and in what situations would I benefit from the use of an FM system?

**A:** Often referred to as a ‘third’ ear, an FM system is basically a Frequency Modulated radio. A microphone is either built-in or attached to the transmitter which picks up the speech signal and "broadcasts" it to the FM receiver, worn by the recipient. An FM system improves the ‘signal to noise ratio’ (i.e., the speech signal becomes more pronounced than the background noise). Many hearing aid wearers do feel that there are several advantages to wearing an FM system paired with their hearing aids for added benefit in situations where they continue to struggle with background noise.

Widespread use of FM systems has been implemented with school age children with hearing loss to give them a ‘boost’ in the classroom. As a result of newer technology and more discrete, smaller size FM systems, more and more adults are using an FM system as well. FM systems provide significant advantages in giving clients the ability to receive spoken messages in a number of difficult listening situations and have many applications in daily use. Examples where an FM would be helpful are:

1. Noisy Restaurants
2. Group Conversations/Meetings
3. Car rides
4. Cocktail Parties
5. TVs, stereos, iPods, walkmans, and cell phones
6. Guided Tours & Travel
7. Sports, and extracurricular lessons and training
8. Lectures, speeches & educational settings
9. Places of worship

Demonstrations as well as a trial period with an FM system are available. If you have further questions regarding the advantage, use and function of FM systems call the HearSay Speech & Hearing Centre and speak to one of the Audiologists on staff.