This document presents a range of questions that clients typically ask hearing care professionals when talking about one hearing aid versus two hearing aids.

Am I a candidate for two hearing aids?
The vast majority of people with bilateral hearing loss will greatly benefit from binaural hearing aid fitting. Persons fitted with two hearing aids are mostly more satisfied than persons fitted with one because they understand better, especially in difficult listening environments.

I have a mild hearing loss and am not that impaired that I need two
Rehabilitation of two ears does not imply that there is a severe impairment. Even someone with one perfect ear and a mild hearing loss in the other ear, suffers with speech understanding in several acoustic environments. So when there are no medical or audiological contra indications, bilateral fitting is always recommended.

What are the advantages of binaural hearing aid fitting?
There is a range of audiological benefits in using two hearing aids instead of one with bilateral hearing losses. The hearing aid user can experience that it is easier 1) to hear sounds from all directions, 2) to find out from which direction a sound is coming and to concentrate on that sound whilst being able to ignore the other sounds or noise, 3) to understand speech in noisy surroundings. The user also 4) benefits from loudness summation, which makes more open fittings possible because of the positive impact on risk of feedback. The user will need a lower level of volume, so the sound appears to be less noisy. Finally 5) hearing aids protect the brain from auditory deprivation where the brain’s ability to discriminate sounds is decreased when not being stimulated.

Are two hearing aids noisier than one?
No, by fitting two hearing aids less gain is needed. For a person the loudness of a sound is greater if it is heard in two ears. This is because of loudness summation where a sound is increased 3-6 dB when presented in both ears compared to when presented in one ear.

By binaural fitting less gain can reduce the risk of feedback. Further larger vents or even open fittings can perhaps be used.

For people with severe hearing losses where a lot of gain is needed, binaural hearing aids can minimize distortion that otherwise would have occurred due to the high output level, because of the lower gain each hearing aid shall produce.

Can binaural hearing aid fitting increase occlusion?
Nowadays we can solve the occlusion effect by using larger vents or open fittings because of efficient feedback cancelling system.

Are there any advantages of having two hearing aids when suffering from tinnitus?
Yes, using hearing aids can reduce the contrast between the tinnitus and the surrounding sound environment and help break the vicious stress circle.

Even with unilateral tinnitus, the hearing aid users should be fitted binaurally in order to hit as much of the neural spots in the brain as possible. With two hearing aids you can also avoid to get bothered from tinnitus in the opposite ear.

I am concerned about the costs of two hearing aids.
The benefits of bilateral fitting are really worthwhile. If despite of that one is concerned about the finance, the hearing aid user could be offered buying two less expensive hearing aids. A person with bilateral hearing loss can greatly benefit of wearing two hearing aids instead of only one. The audiological benefits will in most cases exceed the loss in benefits the hearing aid user will experience going from high end to bestselling hearing aids.