



ASSOCIATED  
AUDILOGISTS

Leaders in Audiological Care for Hearing,  
Tinnitus and Balance Disorders.

Things to consider  
when purchasing  
a hearing aid.



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Our goal is to help you hear your best. A comprehensive diagnostic hearing evaluation will determine the type and degree of hearing loss. This will allow your audiologist to consider a wide range of options when selecting the best prescription or over-the-counter hearing aid for your individual circumstances. Other considerations include cosmetics, functionality, flexibility, ear size, maintenance and cost. Please bring any special concerns or health issues to your audiologist's attention at the time of your examination and consultation.

# Tips for Purchasing Hearing Aids

From Associated Audiologists, Inc.

- 1 **Find the right provider and begin with a diagnostic hearing evaluation which is the “blueprint” for your individualized recommendations.** Ninety percent of your success with hearing aids is related to the professional you work with. At Associated Audiologists, our audiologists are university-trained, doctoral-level audiologists who are certified by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, and uphold a professional code of ethics.
- 2 **Work with a provider who can give you options specific to you and your lifestyle.** Your audiologist should be able to choose from a variety of prescription or over-the-counter hearing aids from a number of respected manufacturers. Franchise or “chain” stores often do not provide this flexibility for consumers.
- 3 **There are significant differences across hearing aid technology.** A hearing aid uses tiny computer chips to process sound. More sophisticated computer chips have better processing which help make it easier for you to hear and understand in all situations. Typically, the cost of prescription hearing aids is \$1,500-\$5,400 a pair, depending on the sophistication of technology purchased. Prescription hearing aids also can be sold as individual units. The length of time or amount of the professional hearing aid-related services also can affect purchase price. Over-the-counter hearing aids are only sold as pairs and range in cost from \$800-\$1,200 a pair. This cost typically does not include professional services or a warranty like prescription hearing aids do.
- 4 **Make sure your audiologist uses specialized diagnostic and verification equipment,** including real-ear probe microphone and speech mapping measures. These sophisticated tests independently verify how the hearing aid functions while in your ear, and ensure you aren’t getting over-amplified.
- 5 **Regular follow-ups are necessary so expect to pre-schedule your appointments if you wear prescription hearing aids.** Routine maintenance and regular monitoring of hearing and hearing aids are critical to success.
- 6 **A prescription hearing aid purchase should include an assessment period** during which the hearing aid fee is either fully refundable, or has a minimum non-refundable amount, if the device isn’t satisfactory. Be sure to ask about the other options available if a particular device doesn’t work out during the assessment period.
- 7 **Be informed.** Advertisements that offer big discounts or special “discount plans” are usually based upon inflated manufacturer’s suggested retail price (MSRP). “Free trials” are often non-custom devices fit without verification. Also, be wary of advertisements promising discounts for trying new hearing aids under “study or clinical trial.” These marketing techniques can be misleading because hearing aid manufacturers conduct these studies prior to new product release. Beware of what appear to be less expensive options or third-party discount programs for hearing aids. These may not include all the professional services necessary to meet your ongoing needs. In addition, they sometimes only offer off-brand, lower-end technology.
- 8 **The FDA issued its ruling establishing a new class of hearing aids in August 2022 called over-the-counter, or OTC hearing aids.** OTC hearing aids are only for individuals with perceived mild-to-moderate hearing loss. They are not for children under age 18 or for those with more severe hearing loss. Before purchasing OTC or prescription hearing aids, professional organizations recommend that the consumer have a diagnostic hearing evaluation to understand the type and degree of hearing loss, and available options.

Prescription hearing aids are fit by licensed professionals such as audiologists. They have the ability to customize the hearing aid fitting and help patients whose hearing loss is more severe. Whether purchasing OTC or prescription hearing aids, consumers should be cautious to not be taken advantage of and they should fully understand return requirements and non-refundable fees.

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