

# Getting hearing aids

The first-time hearing aid user may wonder where to begin. This checklist guides you through getting hearing aids that match your needs and adjusting to wearing hearing aids.

## Getting started

The Minnesota Department of Health's webpage, [What to Know When Buying Prescription Hearing Aids](#) offers a general overview of your rights.

## My first step

- Read [What to Know When Buying Prescription Hearing Aids](#) ([health.state.mn.us/facilities/providers/hid/hearingaids.html](http://health.state.mn.us/facilities/providers/hid/hearingaids.html)).
- If you are buying over-the-counter hearing aids, also refer to [Over-the-counter hearing aids](#) ([edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Public/DHS-8379-ENG](http://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Public/DHS-8379-ENG)).

## Check your hearing

If you are 18 or older, you are not required to see a doctor.

Getting your hearing tested and having a health care provider examine your ears before buying hearing aids is still a good idea.

## Getting my hearing checked

- Check with my medical insurance for in-network hearing health care providers (audiologists, ENTs and/or hearing aid dispensers).
- Make an appointment for a medical and/or audiological examination.
- Tell my health care provider that I have problems hearing sounds/conversations.
- Tell my health care provider if I have drainage, excessive ear wax, dizziness, feeling of "fullness" in the ear, ringing or other sounds in the ear, etc.

## Hearing test results

Your hearing health care provider should discuss your hearing test results with you and answer your questions.

Keep a copy of your audiogram for your files.

If you have a mild-to-moderate hearing loss and are over age 18, you are not required to get a hearing test to buy over-the-counter (OTC) hearing aids.

## My hearing test results

I have a:

- Conductive hearing loss
- Sensorineural hearing loss
- Mixed hearing loss

My hearing loss is in:

- Right ear
- Left ear
- Both ears

My speech recognition scores are:

- Right ear      %
- Left ear        %

Other:

My level of hearing loss is:

- Mild  
Right ear/Left ear/Both
- Moderate  
Right ear/Left ear/Both
- Moderate-Severe  
Right ear/Left ear/Both
- Severe  
Right ear/Left ear/Both
- Profound  
Right ear/Left ear/Both

## Communication challenges

It is important to tell your hearing health care provider about where you have a hard time communicating and what you need.

## Hearing aid choices

There are many choices available in hearing aids. If possible, find a clinic that has several major brands of hearing aids.

Ask your hearing health care provider any questions you have about hearing aid choices. Also ask why certain recommendations were made. If you are not satisfied with the answers or still have doubts, ask more questions and/or find another hearing health care provider.

Remember to bring your recent hearing test results (audiogram) with you when purchasing hearing aids.

### Learn more about hearing aids

National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders' (NIDCD) [Hearing Aids](https://www.nidcd.nih.gov/health/hearing-aids) (nidcd.nih.gov/health/hearing-aids)

Mayo Clinic's [Hearing aids: How to choose the right one](https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/hearing-loss/in-depth/hearing-aids/art-20044116) (mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/hearing-loss/in-depth/hearing-aids/art-20044116)

## My communication challenges and needs

- One-on-one discussions
- Medium size groups
- Large groups
- In the car
- At restaurants
- In classes
- At places of worship
- Watching TV or listening to audio content
- On the telephone
- Choir/music group
- Other:

## My hearing aid recommendations

One or two hearing aids:

Style recommended:

- Behind-the-ear (BTE)
- Mini BTE
- In the ear (ITE)
- In-the-canal (ITC)
- Completely-in-canal (CIC)

Brand/manufacturer recommended:

Why this brand was recommended:

Technology level recommended:

- Essential (entry or basic)
- Intermediate
- Advanced
- Premium

Type of insert:

- Dome
- Custom earmolds

Why this insert was recommended:

Other:

## Hearing aid features

Depending on the type and technology level of the hearing aid some features may be available on your hearing aid, and others may not.

Important! Tell your hearing health provider if you have a hard time seeing or handling small objects. This can make it harder for you to feel the switches or buttons on the hearing aid, change the hearing aid batteries, handle a small hearing aid, put earmold or dome in your ear, etc.

## Hearing aid accessories

Accessories are designed to work with your hearing aids. They may help you understand speech better in certain settings.

## Other questions you may have

You have the right to ask questions about all costs, warranty and services provided before you commit.

A reputable provider will be able to answer your questions.

## My hearing aid features

- Telecoils
- Bluetooth
- Streaming sound from audio source (might need to purchase additional accessories)
- Made for iPhone
- Made for Android (not many hearing aids available with this option)
- Programs that I can choose (listening in noise, telecoil, telephone program, listening to music, other)
- Automatic volume selection
- Automatic program selection
- Feedback/whistling cancellation
- Rechargeable
- Hearing aid management app
- Other:

## Accessories available for my hearing aid

- TV streamer
- Phone streamer
- Remote microphone
- Remote control
- Neckloop/power neckloop (if you have a telecoil)
- Other:

## My questions

- What is the total cost of the hearing aids?
- What is included in this cost? (Examples: tubing replacement, basic maintenance/cleaning, reprogramming, other)
- What will my insurance cover?
- What financing options are available?
- What fees will I pay if I return the hearing aids within the trial period?
- How long is the trial period?
- How long is the warranty?
- Can the warranty be extended?
- What is covered during the warranty period?
- Do you provide loaner hearing aids when repairs are needed?
- Other:

## Hearing aid care and maintenance

On average, hearing aids last 4-6 years. Taking care of your hearing aids can help them perform their best and extend their lifespan.

## Adjusting to hearing aids

It can take 2-4 weeks (sometimes longer) to get used to new hearing aids.

The first few days you may find wearing hearing aids overwhelming: loud sounds will be louder, and you may hear sounds you are not used to.

While hearing aids do not restore hearing to “typical” levels, you should be able to hear and understand more sounds with hearing aids than without.

## My hearing aid care and maintenance instructions

- Using a hearing aid dryer
- Storing my hearing aids
- Cleaning my domes or earmolds
- Cleaning my hearing aids
- How often I should check hearing aids, change tubing, replace filters, etc.
- What to do if hearing aids get wet
- Hearing aid adjustments/services provided remotely
- Battery size:
- Other:

## My steps to adjust to hearing aids

- Set realistic expectations of what my hearing aids can and cannot do.
- Walk around the house, yard, neighborhood and community and identify the sounds I hear. Take along a listening partner to help identify unfamiliar sounds.
- Take breaks if I feel overwhelmed when wearing my hearing aids.
- If needed, slowly increase the hours per day I wear my hearing aids.
- Make phone calls, starting with people I know well.
- Try the telecoil on the phone or with a neckloop.
- Use my hearing aid accessories.
- Check out the app.
- If my ears are sore from the dome or earmold, contact my hearing health care provider.

## Additional resources

You can find more information on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Division’s website, especially the [Publications](https://mn.gov/deaf-hard-of-hearing/learning-center/publications/) page (mn.gov/deaf-hard-of-hearing/learning-center/publications/).

- [Age-related hearing loss](https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Public/DHS-7189-ENG) (edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Public/DHS-7189-ENG)
- [Assistive equipment and technology](https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Public/DHS-7910-ENG) (edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Public/DHS-7910-ENG)
- [Cell phones for people with hearing aids](https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Public/DHS-7911-ENG) (edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Public/DHS-7911-ENG)
- [Cochlear and other hearing implants](https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Public/DHS-7912-ENG) (edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Public/DHS-7912-ENG)
- [Hearing aid appeals: Information for parents](https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Public/DHS-7915-ENG) (edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Public/DHS-7915-ENG)
- [Hearing aid financial resources](https://mn.gov/deaf-hard-of-hearing/assistive-technology/hearing-aids/hearing-aid-resources.jsp) (mn.gov/deaf-hard-of-hearing/assistive-technology/hearing-aids/hearing-aid-resources.jsp)
- [Over-the-counter hearing aids](https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Public/DHS-8379-ENG) (edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Public/DHS-8379-ENG)

