



ARE YOU ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS ABOUT HEARING AIDS?

Purchasing a Hearing Aid is an important investment into improving your health and lifestyle. It's imperative you do your research to ensure you choose the best Hearing Aid for your soundscape. Utilize this valuable information as a tool to help you choose the right Doctor of Audiology and help you avoid losing money to misleading marketing and sales gimmicks.

WHAT ARE THE QUALIFICATIONS FOR SOMEONE TO FIT HEARING AIDS?

- 1) Doctor of Audiology (*minimum requirement - Specialized Doctoral degree with 8-10 years of further education*)
- 2) Hearing Instrument Specialist (*as of 1-1-2013 the minimum requirement - Only an Associate's Degree in any field*)
- 3) Hearing Instrument Specialist (*before 1-1-2013 – Only a high school diploma*)

*****Unfortunately, the standards for who can fit a hearing aid have become very lax; creating a retail model instead of a patient health & service model. Not all hearing loss requires a hearing aid, so ensure you're choosing a Doctor of Audiology that will correctly & medically diagnose your hearing loss. Ask your Primary Care Physicians for recommendations and get multiple opinions/quotes. Fitting a hearing aid for your lifestyle takes multiple appointments & adjustments. A Doctor of Audiology should be spending quality time with you and treating you like a valued patient and not a consumer.***

ARE THE HEARING AIDS BEING DISPENSED FROM ONE OF THE "BIG 6" HEARING AID MANUFACTURERS?

Phonak | Starkey | ReSound | Widex | Oticon | Siemens

*****If hearing aid doesn't have one of these names on it, DON'T BUY IT! It will be very hard to obtain and retain warranties and receive the necessary repairs if the Hearing Aid is not one of the above manufactures.***

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A HIGH-END AND A LOW-END HEARING AID?

HEARING AID BUYER'S GUIDE		
Technology Type	Channels	Price for 1
Basic	4 - 6	\$800 - \$1200
Good	8 - 12	\$1200 - \$1600
Better	13 - 17	\$1600 - \$1900
Best	18 - 20	\$2000 - \$2300

*****You should NEVER pay more than \$5,000 for any pair of hearing aids. The more channels, the better one does in background noise. Most people purchasing hearing aids never ask about channels.***

WHAT DO I NEED TO LOOK FOR WHEN TRYING HEARING AIDS, TO MAKE SURE THEY WORK FOR ME?

- 1) A down-payment of any sort (*DON'T DO IT!*)
 - 2) A scan of my credit card (*DON'T DO IT!*)
 - 3) A required fee if I don't keep the hearing aids (*DON'T DO IT!*)
 - 4) Looking for Research Participants - How can you tell if the study is real? Ask for their I.R.B. If they do not know what an I.R.B. document is, or cannot produce one, it is not a legitimate research study. (*DON'T DO IT!*)
 - 5) A risk-free trial (**no down payment, no charge and keep no deposit**) to assure I'm happy with the benefit of the hearing instruments (**YES!**)
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WHAT COMES WITH THE PURCHASE OF HEARING AIDS?

- 1) Manufacturer Warranty (*Should be between 1-3 yrs; free repair if anything breaks or malfunctions on the hearing aid*)
 - 2) Lost & Damage Warranty (*Should be between 1-3 yrs; if you lose the hearing aids they can be replaced for a small deductible!*)
 - 3) Customer Service Warranty (*Should be the life of the hearing aid. This will help you avoid hidden costs & scams*)
 - 4) Batteries (*Be careful here! Often the price of batteries are inflated and built into the cost of the hearing aids*)
 - 5) Cleaning Supplies (*Should be provided at no cost*)
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EDUCATE YOURSELF ON HEARING AID GIMMICKS!

As a Doctor of Audiology, I'm constantly warning patients about what I call "Hearing Aid Gimmicks." Amplification and hearing aids are a big part of hearing healthcare. 90% of adult hearing loss is sensorineural, or nerve damage. Sensorineural hearing loss is a permanent loss that cannot be treated with medication or surgical intervention. What this means is that our course of action to recovery is a hearing aid. Unfortunately, the standards of who can fit a hearing aid have been very lax, and because of it there are several "hearing aid gimmicks" out there that I would like to caution consumers to watch out for.

Top 5 Marketing Gimmicks

1. **Discounts off M.S.R.P. (manufacturer's suggested retail price):**

*This is the most widely used gimmick in the hearing aid industry today. M.S.R.P. is a fake price elevated to make the consumer feel like they are getting a big discount off the hearing aids. **IT IS NOT REAL!** Anytime you see "Buy One Get One Free" or 40 % to 50% off M.S.R.P. you would be wise to get a second opinion. Be very weary of this deceitful practice and anytime M.S.R.P. is being used in any form. Consult our pricing guide to get a feel of what you should be paying.*

2. **Bait and Switch Ad:**

Some providers will advertise the latest technology and then post an extremely low price that actually describes a different hearing aid. The provider has no intention of selling the lower price aid, and quite frankly, you wouldn't want to purchase it. But nonetheless, the ad is misleading because you think you are going to get the greatest technology for a ridiculously low price, when

actually you end up paying much more. These types of ads serve one purpose... to put you at ease and get you in the door.

3. Selling Outdated Technology:

Just like cars, computers and other electronics, new and improved models of hearing devices are always being developed. Once a hearing aid has been “outdated” for some time, it may become available to a Provider for a lower cost. Some providers may continue to sell these outdated models for today’s current technology prices. Instead of providing their patients with the best technology available or passing the savings on to them, the provider is simply increasing his profit margin. That isn’t putting the patient first.

4. Looking for Research Participants:

This is just another misleading marketing gimmick. The way it works, is the provider claims to be looking for several participants to test a new form of hearing aid technology. Subjects are told at the end of the study they will be allowed to purchase the hearing aids at a huge discount (M.S.R.P. again!). This is misleading because consumers believe if it is research the provider must be reputable. There are sanctioned studies that use subjects, but the ethical practice is not to sell the hearing aids at the end of the research study. How can you tell if the study is real?...ask for their I.R.B. If they do not know what an I.R.B. document is or cannot produce one, it is not a legitimate research study. You would be wise to pass on this one!

5. Dispensers in Trailers/Mobile Hearing Instrument Specialist:

It requires several appointments with an Audiologist to properly fit a hearing aid for your lifestyle along with complimentary yearly routine maintenance checks. Many dispensers “run bait and switch ads”, arrive into town for a day, sell someone a hearing aid and never return.

Unfortunately, the patients / purchasers are left with nowhere to turn for maintenance, cleaning, warranties and general patient services when purchasing a hearing aid from a “fly by night” dispenser in a trailer. This one is simple. NEVER PURCHASE A HEARING AID FROM A SPECIALIST IN A TRAILER OR SOMEONE THAT DOESN'T OWN A PHYSICAL PRACTICE WITHIN A COMFORTABLE DRIVING DISTANCE.

6. Bringing in The Expert:

This is a terribly deceptive practice. The “experts” brought in work for a particular hearing aid manufacturer and will try to get you into a product. They only get paid if they get you into a product! They are not “experts” but simply “closers.”