



## 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 6 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.*

#### ***\*\*Example of a fake price elevated M.S.R.P. Ad:***

*On Wednesday, June 4th, Thursday, June 5th, & Friday, June 6th, we will be offering you our best deal ever. Our 100% digital hearing instruments will be up to 80% off. Here are two examples – the BTE Qualitone DP7 that has an MSRP of \$2,295 we will be offering these 3 days only for \$695, and the ITE Qualitone 20 that retails nationwide for over \$4,495 we will have available for only \$895, during this special 3 day event. As an added bonus, we will also provide free batteries for 12 months. I know this all sounds too good to be true, but I promise you it's real.*

***\*\* The \$2,295 and \$4,495 are severely inflated to make the discount seem bigger***

***\*\* You always want to purchase from one of the big 6 manufactures – Phonak, Oticon, Starkey, ReSound, Widex or Siemens. These manufactures provide the best sound quality, technology, maintenance and warranties.***

#### 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.”

## **HEARING AID BUYER’S GUIDE**

Technology Type	Channels	Price for 1
<b>Basic</b>	<b>4 - 6</b>	<b>\$800 - \$1200</b>
<b>Good</b>	<b>8 - 12</b>	<b>\$1200 - \$1600</b>
<b>Better</b>	<b>13 - 17</b>	<b>\$1600 - \$1900</b>
<b>Best</b>	<b>18 - 20</b>	<b>\$2000 - \$2300</b>