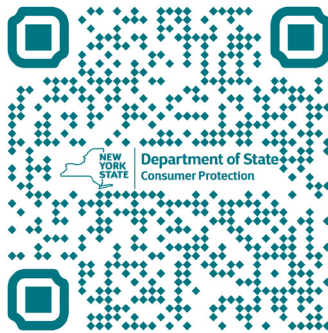


Consumer Education Guide:

Understanding Hearing Aid Options



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For more information, visit the Food and Drug Administration's website: fda.gov/medical-devices/consumer-products/hearing-aids

Guide to Understanding Hearing Aid Options

This guide provides a comparison of consumers' options when purchasing hearing aids. If you're considering over-the-counter hearing aids, use this chart to evaluate your options and identify key differences when choosing between over-the-counter or traditional prescription hearing aids.

Professionally Fitted Hearing Aids • VS • Over-the-Counter (OTC) Hearing Aids

HEARING TEST



- A Registered Professional Will:
 - Test your hearing and you will receive a copy of the audiogram test. The results will be used to help you pick a product that meets your needs.
 - Check your ears for wax build up that could be blocking your hearing.
 - Refer you to a specialist if your hearing tests reveal a condition that is medically treatable.



- You will not receive a hearing test when you buy over-the-counter hearing aids.

CHOOSING A HEARING AID



- A Registered Professional will:
 - Discuss your specific hearing needs to help you pick a hearing aid that is most appropriate for you and your budget.
 - A registered professional can help you find the right hearing aid for any level of hearing loss, including severe or profound hearing loss.
- Generally prescription hearing aids cost more than over-the-counter hearing aids. However, the hearing aid provider may verify your insurance to see if coverage is available.



- You will need to pick the product yourself. Different brands and models of over-the-counter hearing aids have different features, customer service availability, return policies, and set-up processes. You will need to do your research to make sure the device you pick can meet your needs.
- Over-the counter hearing aids are generally the least expensive option available.
- Over-the-counter hearing aids must comply with regulations limiting how much sound they can amplify, meaning they are not suitable to treat severe hearing loss. These hearing aids are intended for people with mild to moderate hearing loss.

HEARING AID FITTINGS



- A registered professional will program the device to your unique hearing needs. They will also make sure the device is comfortable and properly fits. The provider will work with you to make sure you are able to correctly use the device on your own.



- You are responsible for ensuring a proper fit and professional assistance is not provided.

RETURNS & WARRANTIES



- A registered dispenser must allow you to return the device within 45 days and is required to issue you a refund.



- Check the product return and refund policies before you buy. You may not be able to return or get a refund on an over-the-counter hearing aid purchase.
- Over-the-counter hearing aids are also required to include a short, accurate statement of the manufacturer's return policy on the product's package (if they allow for returns at all). Over-the-counter hearing aids are not required to provide a warranty.

FOLLOW UP VISITS AND RESOLUTION OF ISSUES



- A registered professional will schedule follow-up visits as necessary to address any difficulties you may have with the device. They are also required to be available to provide adjustments and servicing for any hearing aids they have dispensed.



- If you run into any issues with the hearing aids, you will need to contact the device manufacturer. There are no industry standards or laws requiring assistance be provided after you purchase the over-the-counter hearing aid.

ROUTINE CLEANING AND SOUND QUALITY CHECKS



- If you purchase a hearing aid from a registered dispenser, you can take your device back to the dispenser for routine cleaning and maintenance for the best performance.



- You will not receive routine cleaning and sound quality check services when you purchase over-the-counter hearing aids.