

Purchasing Hearing Aids What You Need to Know

Brought to you by Davidson Hearing Aid Centres



We all know somebody whose hearing aids live in their bedside drawer. Or maybe you are that somebody. There could be several valid reasons why these hearing aids go unworn, but we are here to help you solve the problem.

We recognize that there can be a lot of uncertainty for the consumer and we would like to help you navigate the waters. When considering hearing aids, it is essential to ask these questions.

Do I have hearing loss? What technology is available? What are the costs? Does it matter where I buy my hearing aids?

While different factors are important for different individuals, they must all be considered fully, in order to have the hearing aid that is most appropriate. We cannot simply choose on size or manufacturer, or even cost. Where you buy your hearing aids will have a big impact on the likelihood of their success, depending on the type of service that you will need. Considering all of the important factors will help keep the hearing aids in your ears instead of the drawer!

Hearing Loss Checklist

If you answer “Yes” to any of the following statements, it is strongly recommended that you have your hearing tested.

- I require frequent repetition in order to understand speech.
- I have difficulty following conversations with more than two people.
- I think other people’s voices sound muffled.
- I have difficulty hearing in noisy situations.
- I have trouble hearing children and women.
- I turn the TV or radio up louder than others.
- I answer or respond inappropriately in conversations.
- I experience ringing in my ears.
- I read lips or depend on other people’s facial expressions during conversations.

Hearing Aid Styles Available

RECEIVER IN THE CANAL (RIC)



RIC hearing aids are the ideal solution for many first time hearing aid users with mild to moderate high frequency hearing loss. Their nearly invisible open design offers unmatched comfort and a very natural sound. Since there is so little material in the actual ear canal, they remain the easiest devices to adapt to. Most models include directional microphones for improved hearing in noise.



COMPLETELY IN THE CANAL (CIC)



CIC and micro CIC hearing aids are the smallest style and are nearly invisible. They are best suited for mild to moderate hearing losses. Sitting deep in the ear canal tends to allow them to work well with telephones and headphones. However, due to their small size, they require good dexterity and have a shorter battery life than some of the larger models. They also lack the physical space to include directional microphones.



IN THE CANAL (ITC)



ITC hearing aids are slightly visible and are best suited for mild to severe hearing losses. With their slightly larger size, ITC hearing aids typically include directional microphones, which allow the hearing aids to locate where sound is originating, providing better hearing in noise. At this size, the hearing aids can also have a volume control on the devices



IN THE EAR (ITE)



ITE hearing aids have the same fitting range and options as the ITC models, but in a slightly larger design making them easier to insert and remove. They also have a larger battery size offering the longest battery life, while making it easier to change batteries.



BEHIND THE EAR (BTE)



BTE hearing aids tend to be the most powerful models. They are ideal for moderate to profound hearing losses. For anyone with a very severe to profound hearing loss, this style is still the best option. Like the ITC and ITE styles, they typically have directional microphones for improved hearing in background noise, in addition to often having built in volume and program adjustments.



Hearing Aid Performance Levels

The money you invest in a hearing aid can range from \$495 to over \$3000 per aid. While this is an extremely wide range, it is important to understand that there are significant differences between the hearing aids at the various price levels. As consumers, we all want to get the best products and services at an affordable price.

How is a more expensive hearing aid different than a less expensive one?

The price you pay is a reflection of the hearing aid's sound quality and performance. As a rule, the more you pay, the better the product will work in more challenging listening environments, such as in groups, churches or halls, and other loud places where there is background noise. The price has little to do with the appearance, power level, style or brand of the hearing aid. You can purchase most styles of hearing aids in any price range.

In 2014, an international study was performed comparing patient satisfaction between the different performance levels of hearing aids. The results showed an almost 30% improvement in patient satisfaction as the hearing aid performance increased from good to best.



How Today's Hearing Aids Are Better

Over the past 5 years, patient satisfaction with hearing aids has been steadily increasing. This is due to the huge improvements in technology. Here are some of the reasons why.

Improvements to Background Noise Reduction

Hearing in noisy situations is one of the biggest challenges for those with hearing loss. The newest generation of hearing aids can analyze and categorize the incoming sounds into speech sounds and noise sounds. Although this process is usually referred to as noise reduction, a better name for this technology is actually "speech enhancement" as there is no way to completely eliminate the background noise. After categorizing all sounds as either speech or noise, the hearing aids will then make adjustments to the amplification levels to maximize the speech sounds while minimizing noise. This allows the speech to be lifted out of the ambient noise, improving the hearing aid user's ability to understand conversations.

Directional Microphones - Hear What You Want

But what happens when the background noise is also speech? Most models of hearing aids now offer directional microphones which allow the hearing aid to determine which direction a sound is coming from. Once the noise floor of the environment exceeds a certain level, the hearing aid switches into a directional mode, which provides emphasis to the speech occurring in the front. You will still hear people talking from beside and behind you, but the voices directly in front of you will be given more amplification, making them easier to understand.

Bluetooth & Wireless Technology

Wireless technology has been getting more and more attention recently. What wireless systems mean to the hearing aid user is that they allow your hearing aids to communicate with other devices such as TV's, stereos, computers, mobile phones, landline phones, etc. This direct transmission of sound to the hearing aids improves the signal quality through reducing distance, echo, reverberation, and background sounds, leading to potentially significant improvements in comprehension. In the case of telephone use, it also allows the transmission to be heard in both ears, which typically further improves word understanding.

Remote Microphone & FM Systems

By attaching a small, separate microphone onto a friend or family members lapel allows their voice to be transmitted directly to the hearing aids. These systems are perfect for hearing a specific speaker at a meeting, a friend's voice in a restaurant, or a spouse while traveling.

Rechargeable Batteries

This September will see the launch of some new hearing aids using fully contained and rechargeable lithium-Ion batteries. These offer longer battery life, quicker charging, and better moisture protection. Don't change a battery again!



Does it Matter Where You Purchase your Hearing Aid?

YES! - There are a number of factors to consider when choosing where to purchase a hearing aid:

Price

While consumers want to compare prices between different hearing aid clinics, it is important to realize when shopping around for quotes, that there are often hidden costs. You need to know if you will be charged additionally for follow-up visits, future checkups, adjustments and cleanings, or if they will be included in the initial cost of the hearing aid. Will you pay for future hearing testing or is that also included? How many batteries come with the initial hearing aid purchase? What is the warranty period included with the purchase? If you end up paying for future visits, batteries, parts and repairs, it will greatly impact the total price you pay over the life of your hearing aid.

At Davidson's, the initial price you pay includes all testing, future follow-up appointments, adjustments and most in-house repairs made for the lifetime of the hearing aids, as well as batteries for the first three years.

Money back guarantee?

What happens if you purchase hearing aids and are not satisfied? Perhaps you don't find them as effective as you expected, or they are physically not comfortable. Occasionally this does happen. The Ontario government requires all hearing aid companies to provide a minimum 30 day return period on hearing aid purchases. Some clinics offer a much longer return period, while many others do not refund all of your money because they are allowed to charge a return fee. This is a fee charged for the time and effort they spent working with you. While other clinics return all of your money, with no return fee. This is information you should know prior to purchasing hearing aids!

At Davidson's, we offer a **no risk 90 day guarantee** with no hidden fees charged for returns or exchanges.

Are you making your purchase from an Independent or Manufacturer-controlled clinic?

A relatively new trend in our industry is for hearing aid manufacturers to own hearing aid clinics. This is similar to Apple computers or Sony electronics having their own retail stores, in addition to selling their products through other outlets such as Staples, Future Shop, and Best Buy. The difference in the hearing aid industry is that the public is not made aware of the relationship between hearing aid manufacturers and the local hearing aid clinics. The name of the clinic is not the same as the manufacturer. When you walk into the Apple store you know that the only products offered are Apple, but when you walk into a manufacturer owned clinic, you are not aware that the products being recommended to you are likely the ones that the particular manufacturer produces.

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Looking at this from another perspective, how would you feel if you found out that your family doctor was working for a large pharmaceutical company? It seems like a conflict of interest. You need to be aware when you go to a manufacturer owned clinic, that the selection of products may be far more limited. Sometimes what is best for your individual needs may not be what is prescribed.

Because Davidson's is a privately owned, local, family business, we choose from all manufacturers' makes and models. This gives us the flexibility to prescribe the best possible products to meet our clients' individual hearing needs. Below are some of the manufacturers that we work with.



The Clinic Staff

While many clinics can and do sell the same products, purchasing a hearing aid is not like going to your pharmacy to buy prescription medications. You could go to any number of pharmacies and end up with exactly the same medication. A hearing aid requires a significant degree of **customization of sound output** and **physical fit** during the first few months. Also, a hearing aid requires regular service, adjustments and repairs over its lifespan. **The hearing aid industry is really a service industry** - not just a product industry. Think of it this way, when you purchase a hearing aid you are not only buying a product but also a five year working relationship; the typical lifespan of a hearing aid. It is very important that the clinic's staff is knowledgeable when it comes to choosing the best product for each individual, as well as programming, fine tuning, servicing, and repairing the hearing aids. Is the clinic's staff friendly and accommodating? They are the ones who make the difference in your hearing aid experience!

Davidson's pride ourselves on our commitment to customer service. We have audiologists, hearing instrument specialists and hearing aid technicians on staff to give our customers the best possible hearing healthcare experience.

Hearing Aid Rental Program

Davidson Hearing Aid Centres is excited to offer you this all new approach to hearing healthcare. This exclusive new Hearing Aid Rental Program offers the following advantages.

Low Monthly Costs

It's as easy as 1,2,3. Have your hearing tested, choose the style of hearing aid that you want, and simply pay for the performance level that your lifestyle requires. The monthly payment is made via your credit card.

No Unexpected Costs

Your rental program covers everything. Batteries, repairs, office visits, computer programming, clean and checks, and even offers a one time loss and damage coverage.

Always have the Latest Technology

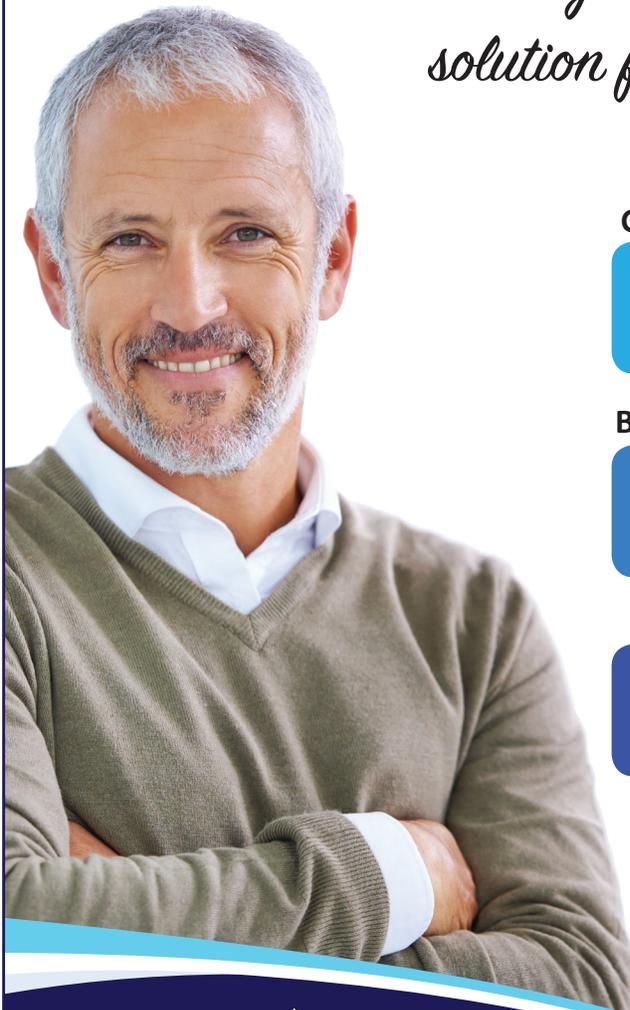
One of the great benefits of our Hearing Aid Rental Program is that your hearing aids are upgraded to the latest technology every 3 years. Forget having your hearing aids become outdated, or have to worry about the cost of replacing them down the road.

To find out if renting or buying makes the most sense for you, please schedule an appointment with one of our hearing health care providers at the location most convenient to you.

Find out how something so small can change the way you live your life

Now for as little as \$59 a month

"Renting is the perfect solution for me"



Good Performance

\$59

a month per ear

Better Performance

\$79

a month per ear

Best Performance

\$95

a month per ear

Exclusively At:

Davidson
Hearing Aid Centres



1943 - 2013

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YEARS OF
EXCELLENCE

What Comes With Your Purchase

- **90 Day Satisfaction Guarantee**

If you are not satisfied with your hearing aid for any reason, we can exchange for a different style, manufacturer, or even offer a complete refund. There are no hidden costs!

- **3 Year Manufacturer Warranty**

(available on most models)

- **1 Year Loss and Damage Coverage**

(one time coverage per hearing aid with only a small deductible for a replacement)

- **First 3 Years of Batteries Included with Purchase**

(3 year supply is 180 batteries per device - not included with Budget devices)

- **Routine 6 Month Service Appointments**

We don't charge for office visits. Your purchase entitles you to cleaning and performance evaluations of your hearing aids for their lifetime. We normally recommend hearing aids be serviced every 6 months, but if you need to come in sooner, we are just a phone call away. In addition to this, we also perform wax removal and many on-site repairs at no additional cost.

- **Ongoing Testing and Computer Programming**

Your hearing can change over time and your hearing aids need to as well. That is why we continue to offer follow up testing of your hearing and re-programming of the hearing aids for the lifetime of the devices.



Now with 7 locations to serve you better

OTTAWA EAST
1459 Ogilvie Rd
613-741-4374

OTTAWA
1399 Bank St
613-233-4374

NEPEAN
28 Thorncliff Pl
613-721-8218

BROCKVILLE
16 Central Ave E
613-341-8700

CORNWALL
102A 2nd St E
613-932-4545

PEMBROKE
595 Pembroke St E
613-735-3846

RENFREW
627 Fortington St
613-432-7171

www.davidsonhearingaids.com