

Guide to Buying Hearing Aids for Adults

How do I get a hearing test?

- Hearing tests in Alberta are usually done by a healthcare provider called an **audiologist** (au-di-ol-o-gist). These tests are done at many health facilities and community health centres for people with a valid Alberta Personal Health Card.
- You can also get a hearing (audiology) test at private audiology clinic. Some health insurance companies, such as Alberta Blue Cross, will cover or pay the fee. At a private clinic, the test may be done by an audiologist or hearing aid practitioner. You can find information on what each of these professions do at www.sac-oac.ca.
- After testing your hearing, the audiologist or hearing aid practitioner will talk to you about the results. They'll give you some suggestions about what you can do to make your hearing better. This may include information about hearing aids, how to use better communication strategies, or a medical referral if you need one.

What do I need to know before I buy hearing aids?

Trust – Make sure you're comfortable with and trust your audiologist or hearing aid practitioner. It's OK to ask questions and see more than 1 person. This way you can choose the best hearing healthcare provider for you.

Price – Hearing aid prices vary depending on level of technology, accessories, and other services and warranties that may be included. Things to consider:

- remote controls
- Bluetooth connectivity for phones or television
- batteries
- extended warranties

Be sure you know everything that is included in the full price.

Batteries – All hearing aids need batteries. Some clinics may include the cost of batteries with the cost of hearing aids. If this isn't included you'll need to pay this ongoing cost through the life of the hearing aid. There are some hearing aids that have rechargeable battery options.

Funding – Some people may be eligible for funding for hearing aids. If you think this applies to you be sure to talk about it with your audiologist or hearing aid practitioner.

Technology – Many hearing aids may look the same but the technology on the inside may be very different. When you choose a hearing aid, make sure that it suits your lifestyle. This will help you get the best hearing possible. Talk about this with your audiologist or hearing aid practitioner.

Trial period – A 1 month trial period is usual for hearing aids. If you have any problems, call the clinic where you bought the hearing aids right away if you have problems or questions.

Risks – There are risks to buying used or online hearing aids. Be sure to talk this over with your hearing healthcare provider before choosing this.

Follow up – A regular review of your hearing is recommended. This helps to be sure aids are set to the right settings and are working the way they should.

What happens after I get my hearing aids?

It will take time to adjust to how your new hearing aids feel and sound. Your hearing aids should be comfortable in your ears. You'll want to have the right volume so you get the best benefit.

Follow-up appointments with your hearing healthcare professional will help you become more comfortable with your hearing aids. They can help adjust settings so you can have the best hearing possible for you.

Talk to your audiologist or hearing aid practitioner about your experiences with your hearing aids. Take notes of things you like and don't like. This will help you to become a satisfied and successful hearing aid user.

What if I don't want a hearing aid now?

It's common for people who need hearing aids to delay buying and using them. This decision comes with risks. Research shows that the risks include:

- communication with your family and others is more difficult
- feeling isolated and depressed
- memory loss
- getting readmitted to hospital more often

Your ability to do well with hearing aids needs you to be consistent about using them over time. The earlier you start using hearing aids, the better you'll adapt to using them.

How do I find an Audiologist or Hearing Aid Practitioner?

Alberta College of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists (ACLSPA).

www.acslpa.ca - search on the audiology section for the public online listing or call 1-800-537-0589 or 780-944-1609

College of Hearing Aid Practitioners of Alberta (CHAPA)

www.chapa.ca - search the "Locate a Practitioner" section under "For the Public"

Speech and Audiology Canada (SAC)

www.sac-oac.ca - search the "Find a Professional" section

Alberta Aids to Daily Living (AADL)

www.alberta.ca/alberta-aids-to-daily-living.aspx - find a list of approved hearing aid vendors or call 780-427-0731

Call your local Health Centre or search online at www.albertahealthservices.ca

Ask family and friends who are happy with their hearing aids where they got their hearing aid.

This material is for information purposes only. It should not be used in place of medical advice, instruction, or treatment. If you have questions, talk with your healthcare provider.