

Realistic expectations

It is important to have realistic expectations when you first try hearing aids. You may have lost your hearing gradually over a period of years and suddenly sounds are reintroduced that you haven't heard in years. These sounds might be overwhelming at the start but with time and perseverance you can learn to get used to hearing again. Aids will NEVER replicate your natural level of hearing but they can help to improve your quality of life.

Make sure your audiologist is qualified

Your audiologist should be registered with the *Irish Society of Hearing Aid Audiologists (ISHAA)*. There is no regulatory board for audiologists in Ireland so this is one way to ensure that you know your audiologist is qualified and reputable.

Shop Around

It can be difficult figuring out which hearing aid dispenser is the best for you. Ask friends if they have had prior experience as they may be able to recommend a good audiologist. Get as much information as you can before buying your aids so that you can make the best decision for you.

Behind-The-Ear (BTE) or In-The-Ear (ITE) Hearing Aids?

The choice of a BTE or an ITE is entirely up to you and your audiologist. Hearing loss is a unique experience which means there are people who respond well to ITE hearing aids and those who are better suited to a BTE. BTE hearing aids are much more discreet and inconspicuous these days so even those of you who don't want to wear hearing aids for vanity's sake might find them suitable. BTE's are longer lasting and tend to pick up more sounds as the microphones are positioned outside of the ear. They tend to be longer lasting too because they are not exposed to as much ear wax and moisture unlike the ITE's which sit in the ear and are more susceptible to earwax clogging the microphones.

ITE's are usually suitable for people with a mild to moderate loss and BTE's are suitable for people with a mild to severe loss.

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What You Need to Know About Buying Hearing Aids

Cork Deaf Association

Helpful Tips

Buying hearing aids can be a costly affair so it is important to consider a few things before you make that big commitment. The following suggestions may help you to make a more informed decision.

Bring someone with you

It is always advisable to bring a companion to your initial consultation as he/she might pick up vital information you may miss as a result of your hearing loss.

Don't ever feel pressurised into buying your hearing aids

The audiologist should be professional at all times and give you all the information you require to make an informed decision but at no time should you feel under pressure to commit yourself to the purchase of hearing aids.

Ask about the aftercare service

All hearing aids need maintenance and adjustment especially in the first few weeks and months after purchase. Some *behind-the-ear* hearing

aids require new tubes approximately every six months so you need to find out if this is a free service or if you will be charged each time you visit. Are adjustment appointments free of charge and readily available? It can take anywhere up to six months to get used to wearing hearing aids so minor tweaks and adjustments might be required as you try to find a hearing level that suits you.

Find out the full cost

The audiologist should inform you of the full price of your hearing aid/s. There should be no hidden costs. Make sure that you clarify this with the audiologist before you commit to purchasing the aid/s.

Know what you want from your hearing aid

Tell your audiologist how your hearing loss has affected your life so that he/she can anticipate what you expect from the hearing aid. If you find it difficult to hear in crowded situations then your audiologist needs to know. Your hearing aids can be adjusted according to your specific loss thereby giving you the best possible outcome.

Additional Assistive Technologies

Old-fashioned analogue hearing aids have been replaced by digital hearing aids which means your aid can now be linked via a telecoil (loop system) to various assistive listening devices which may give you an even greater quality of hearing in certain situations. There are television, mobile phone and general conversation devices available which can be used with your hearing aid. Ask your audiologist for further information about the loop system and these devices.

Free trial period

Some hearing aid dispensers will give free trials of their hearing aids. It is a good way to see if the aid works for you. However take note of the end date of the trial period and make sure there is no cancellation fee.

Be wary of gimmicky offers

If it seems too good to be true it usually is! Be wary of dispensers who offer too much; it is a sales driven industry so be alert to those who just want to sell you the aid as quickly as possible.

