

Purchasing a Hearing Aid— A Consumer Checklist

TESTING

Were you given a hearing screening¹ or a full hearing exam²?

- Were you given a copy of the audiogram and any other test results and were you given a full explanation of them?
- Were you charged for the examination?
- If yes, were the charges submitted to your insurance company for full or partial reimbursement?

Were you told what type of hearing loss you have and given a thorough explanation of it?

- Was it explained why you can sometimes hear what is being said but not always understand it?
- Were you told what a hearing aid can and can't do for you?
- Were you told if there were any types of hearing assistive technology (HAT) that may be beneficial, in addition to or in place of a hearing aid?

Were you asked about the effect of hearing loss on your life at home, work, school, when using the phone, etc.?

- Did you complete any questionnaires about the effects of your hearing loss on your daily life, such as the APHAB (Abbreviated Profile of Hearing Aid Benefit), COSI (Client Oriented Scale of Improvement), or IOI-HA (International Outcome Inventory for Hearing Aids)?

Did a significant other have an opportunity to discuss how the effects of your hearing loss could have an impact on them?

DISPENSING

Do you know why a particular type of hearing aid was recommended?

Types of hearing aids include behind-the-ear (BTE), in-the-ear (ITE), in-the-canal (ITC), completely-in-the-canal (CIC), or receiver in-the-canal (RIC).

- Were your personal preferences considered regarding style and cost?
- Were you asked if you use an iPhone or Android smartphone?

Were the features of your hearing aid explained to you?

- Were you told about the uses and benefits of the telecoil, self-adjusting volume control, directional microphones, etc.?
- Were you told about any accessories available for your hearing aid, such as a remote control?
- Was wireless connectivity to accessories (Bluetooth, Made for iPhone, 2.4 GHz) explained to you?
- Were programs designed to reduce background noise more effectively (other than the automatic default built in to the hearing aid) explained?

Were you asked if your hearing aid fits comfortably?

Was information regarding batteries given or explained to you?

- Were you shown how to put batteries in the hearing aid?
- Were you told where you can buy batteries, how much they cost or about keeping spare batteries handy?
- Were you told if rechargeable batteries were an option for your hearing aid?

Were all the controls explained to you?

- Are remote controls or smartphone apps available to control your hearing aid?

DISPENSING *(continued)*

Was information regarding the care of the hearing aid and earmold explained to you?

- Were you told how to keep earwax out of the sound bore of the earmold?
- What wax prevention options are available for your hearing aid and was an explanation given on how to use them?
- Were you told about using a dehumidifier box for night storage?
- Were you told how often to return for regular checkups and cleaning?

Did you receive written material on all the information discussed with you?

What was discussed during your first follow-up visit?

- Were you asked how your overall listening experience was with the hearing aid?
- Were you asked questions such as whether you were able to hear in noisy environments, if you felt some situations were too loud or if you had any discomfort?
- Were you asked how well the earmold fits and if it was comfortable?
- If you experienced any “whistling” noises?
- Were you told how to troubleshoot any problems?
- Were “real-ear”³ hearing aid measures checked or rechecked?

Were you asked to evaluate if the hearing aid had a positive (or negative) effect on your general quality of life?

- Were there any improvements at home, at work, at school, when going out, etc.?
- Did they repeat the APHAB, COSI or IOI-HA questionnaires?

Did you receive information about using telephones and assistive listening and alerting devices with your hearing aid?

- Were you told about ratings for hearing aids, using cell phones with hearing aids or standards for cordless phones?
- Were you told about direct to iPhone or Android wireless connections, telecoils or Bluetooth adapters?
- Were you told about assistive listening devices (ALDs) using telecoils with audio loops, FM and infrared systems?
- Were you given information about alerting devices for fire and safety, phones and doorbells?

Were group hearing aid orientation sessions offered?

Did you receive information about helpful resources such as speechreading classes and support organizations such as the Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA)?

FULL DISCLOSURE

Did you receive a written contract detailing the services to be provided?

- Were you given the make, model and serial number of your hearing aid?
- Were you told about any repair, loss and/or damage warranties?
- Were you told the price of your hearing aid?
- Were follow-up visits and other services included in the price?
- Did you get the full name, license number and signature of the dispenser?
- Was the date and place of sale noted?

Did you or your dispenser contact your insurance plan provider?

- Did the insurer verify benefits (if you had any included in your plan)?
- Was the coverage explained to you?
- Was any insurance coverage provided by your state law (if applicable) explained to you?
- Did they explain any possible tax credits?

Did the dispenser provide information about the hearing aid manufacturers they work with?

- Did the dispenser disclose how many and which manufacturers they work with?
- Were hearing aid models in different price ranges offered?
- Did the dispenser provide written information on any warranties provided by the manufacturer?

Did the dispenser provide written information about the trial period and refund policy?

- Were you given information about the trial period, return time limits, and whether it was determined by state law?
- Were you told if fees would be charged if the hearing aid is returned within the trial period, and if so, how much the return fee would be?
- Were you told if the trial period would be suspended if the hearing aid malfunctions and needs to be returned for repairs?

¹ Hearing screenings are quick, cost-effective pass/fail tests to determine if you need further evaluation.

² Hearing exams (assessments) determine the degree of hearing loss, the type of hearing loss and the configuration of hearing loss and are conducted in a soundproof booth.

³ “Real-ear” measures use a probe-tube system that reveals the actual output of the hearing aid while a person is wearing the hearing aid.