

The Value of Professional Purchases Verses On-line Purchases

There's no way around it – hearing aids are expensive. They can range from just shy of \$1000 on up to more than \$4000 for each device depending on the level of technology. So when buying hearing aids, it's essential to be sure the money and time spent is well worth it.

What is included in hearing aid cost?

Your purchase typically includes the hearing test, consultation, initial fitting, and ALL follow-up adjustments and routine cleanings, as well as a warranty that can range from one to four years. The warranty often covers all repairs and includes a one-time replacement policy if you lose a hearing aid. Some hearing care professionals also include a supply of hearing aid batteries to get you started.

Factors for hearing aid prices

The main factor that affects the purchase price of hearing aid is the technology level and included features. While the overall prices of hearing aids have remained steady, the technology you can get for the price is far greater currently than it was even just two years ago. What was once considered a top-of-the-line hearing aid is now considered basic technology. All hearing aid manufacturers strive to offer devices that meet the needs of patients and their budgets. To do this, nearly every product line consists of multiple performance levels or price points. The most advanced level will contain all of the latest and greatest features like the most advanced noise reduction circuitry and wireless capabilities. Lower performance levels will contain fewer and less sophisticated features as the price decreases.

Why do hearing aids cost so much?

Hearing aid pricing includes the cost of the device itself as well as the services of the professional. Some of the cost in manufacturing hearing aids is from the research needed to continue making technology advancements each year. **Hundreds of millions of dollars are spent by the industry to improve how these devices perform.** These investments have led to hearing aids that serve people better.



When you purchase a hearing aid, the price often includes all of the professional services that go along with the fitting. Your hearing ability may change, your hearing aid may need repair and you may have questions occasionally. You are making an investment in the professional as well as the hearing aid technology.

Online and mail order hearing aids

You can purchase a lot of things cheaply online, including a ministry ordination and a medical degree. If you have a mild hearing loss, you may be tempted to buy a personal sound amplification product (PSAP) from a website. This product is similar to the eyeglass “cheaters” available at a corner drugstore.

Unlike the glasses, which are easy to set up and adjust, hearing devices require some initial programming to fit your loss. The thing you don't usually get with online hearing devices is a professional fitting. If you needed a hip replacement, would you order the parts online and try to place them yourself?

Kochkin and colleagues at the Better Hearing Institute surveyed more than 2000 hearing aid users about their fitting experience and level of satisfaction. The outcome was straightforward: those users who were fitted using a clinically validated hearing aid fitting protocol had greater satisfaction with their hearing aids. In other words, those patients who were given appropriate support and service by a licensed hearing aid professional actually heard better!

Another finding from Kochkin's research was that a typical hearing aid user will need about three visits after purchase to get a hearing device properly adjusted, and some wearers will need more. You will not be able to get that type of service through the mail.

Hearing aid satisfaction based on service experience

