

Purchasing hearing aids through the mail or internet is strongly discouraged. Hearing aids should be purchased by consulting face-to-face with a licensed hearing care professional, who will provide the proper evaluation, selection, fitting, and follow-up services. These services are considered essential for your overall success.

### Expectations and Outcomes

While hearing aids make sounds easier to hear, they will not restore normal hearing. Hearing aids re-introduce you to many of the sounds you have been missing. It takes time to relearn these sounds. Some people adjust quickly; others take longer. Your outcome with hearing aids will vary by the type and degree of your hearing loss, accuracy of evaluation and proper fit.

### For additional information on hearing loss/hearing aids, contact:

- 1) **North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services: Division of Services for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing**  
2301 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-2301  
Physical Address: Woodoak Building GL-3, 1100 Navaho Drive, Raleigh, NC 27609 Phone: 1-800-851-6099 (Voice/TTY)  
Fax: (919) 855-6872  
Website: [www.ncdhhs.gov/dsdhh](http://www.ncdhhs.gov/dsdhh)

- 2) **Your local hearing care professional**

### Who should I consult if I feel that I have been treated unfairly in the process of obtaining hearing aids?

There are four agencies that can assist you with your written complaint:

- 1) **North Carolina Hearing Aid Dealers and Fitters Board**  
PO Box 97833, Raleigh, NC 27624-7833  
Phone: (919) 834-3661 Fax: (919)834-3665  
Email: [info@nchalb.org](mailto:info@nchalb.org)

- 2) **North Carolina Board of Examiners for Speech and Language Pathologists and Audiologists,**  
PO Box 16885, Greensboro, NC 27416-0885  
Phone: (336) 272-1828 Fax: (336) 272-4353  
Email: [ncboe@bellsouth.net](mailto:ncboe@bellsouth.net)



- 3) **Department of Justice - Attorney General's Office, Consumer Protection Division,**  
9001 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-9001  
Phone: (919) 716-6000 Fax: (919) 716-6050  
Website: [www.ncdoj.gov](http://www.ncdoj.gov)

- 4) **North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services: Division of Services for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing**  
(see reference to the left)

NC Division of Services for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing  
[www.ncdhhs.gov](http://www.ncdhhs.gov) • <http://www.ncdhhs.gov/dsdhh>  
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This publication is the result of a mandate by the NC General Assembly to develop guidelines for consumers to use when purchasing hearing aids. (Session Law 2010-121, House Bill 1705).

## North Carolina Consumers' Guide on Hearing Aids

### You're not alone...

Over one million North Carolina residents have hearing loss and may obtain benefit from the use of hearing aids. Less than half of these individuals have sought help. **If you have any of the following symptoms, have your hearing tested by a North Carolina licensed hearing care professional:**

- You hear, but have trouble understanding all the words in a conversation.
- People seem to mumble, speak indistinctly, or speak too softly.
- You often ask people to repeat themselves.
- You have difficulty understanding conversation in groups or crowds.
- You find telephone conversation increasingly difficult.
- Your family complains that you play the TV too loudly.
- You experience ringing or other noises in your ears.

**Untreated hearing loss can have significant consequences:**

- Avoidance or withdrawal from social situations
- Irritability, frustration, fatigue, stress, and depression
- Increased risk to personal safety
- Reduced job performance and earning power
- Impaired memory and ability to learn new tasks
- Diminished speech understanding

With hearing loss you may experience more difficulty participating in and understanding everyday conversations. For example, words such as “three” and “free” may be confused. This is why individuals often “hear, but don’t understand.” Untreated hearing loss over a long period of time may result in increased difficulty adjusting to hearing aids and understanding speech.

**How do I get started?**

First, have your hearing checked. In North Carolina, this may be done by an audiologist, hearing aid specialist, or physician. If your hearing test reveals that your hearing loss requires medical attention, your hearing care professional will recommend you seek medical care. However, 95% of the time, hearing loss does not require medical attention. Fortunately, this type of loss can be helped with hearing aids in most cases. Your hearing care professional can provide personalized recommendations regarding hearing aids, communication strategies, and assistive devices.

To find a hearing care professional in your area, a good place to start is checking with your health insurance company for any benefit coverage or recommendations. You may also want to ask people you know who wear hearing aids or have a hearing loss for a referral to their hearing care professional.

Once you have chosen a professional, you should ensure that the professional is licensed in North Carolina by contacting one of the following North Carolina licensure boards; North Carolina Hearing Aid Dealers and Fitters Board ([www.nchalb.org](http://www.nchalb.org) Phone (919) 834-3661 or the North Carolina Board of Examiners for Speech and Language Pathologists and Audiologists [www.ncboeslpa.org](http://www.ncboeslpa.org) Phone (336) 272-1828. The professional you choose may be licensed by one or both boards.

When choosing your hearing care professional, it is very important that you feel the professional is trustworthy and is easily accessible. Remember: you will need follow up services for years to come, so choose a professional with whom you are comfortable.

In the event you purchase hearing aids in another state, or from a professional who is not licensed in North Carolina, you may have limited consumer protection under North Carolina law.

**Selecting hearing aids**

There is no single hearing aid suitable for all types of hearing loss; therefore, your hearing care professional will recommend the most appropriate options for you and explain the costs. Costs of hearing aids vary depending upon the nature and extent of your hearing loss and the type of technology chosen to meet your lifestyle and listening needs. See the Consumer’s Checklist on the next page for important questions you should ask when purchasing hearing aids. It is helpful to bring someone with you to assist you during this important decision making process.