

Understanding the Cost of Hearing Devices: Making Informed Decisions

Before Visiting a Hearing Clinic

Before booking an appointment at a hearing clinic, it's a good idea to first talk with your GP. They can help rule out any treatable medical conditions that may affect your hearing.

There are some useful questions to ask when making a hearing appointment. You can read or download it here.

When you visit a hearing clinic, make sure to ask:

- Ask for an explanation of your **audiogram (hearing test results)**
- Discuss the **range of available hearing devices**
- Inquire about **features, costs, and payment options**
- Clarify any **recommendations** from your audiologist
- **Take notes** and request a **copy of your test results**
- Ask about the **conditions of any free trial period**

These steps will help you compare options and make informed decisions.

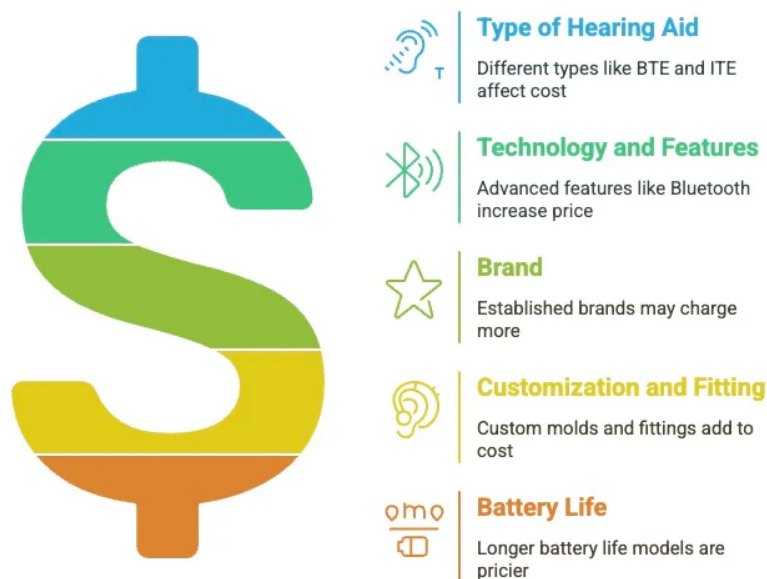


Image: Factors affecting the cost of a hearing aid

Understanding Hearing Devices Costs

Many people are taken aback by the price of hearing devices. There has also been public discussion about commissions and how they can affect pricing and recommendations.

To protect yourself, it's wise to:

- Request a hearing aid trial before committing
- Seek a second opinion if you're unsure about the advice or pricing to ensure transparency and fairness

Bundled vs Unbundled Fees

Bundled Fees

Most hearing clinics charge bundled fees, which means the cost of hearing devices and all services are combined into one fixed price.

Bundled fees usually includes:

- Hearing assessments
- Rehabilitation planning
- Prescription of hearing devices and accessories, ordering and setup, programming and fitting
- Counselling and follow-up appointments
- Repairs during the warranty periods
- All related consultations for the life of the hearing aid

Some clinics offer free or low-cost hearing tests, but these are often offset by the higher cost of the bundled package.

Unbundled Fees

With unbundled pricing, each part of your hearing care is charged separately. This includes:

- Hearing assessments
- Hearing devices and accessories
- Fitting and dispensing services
- Consultation fees for each appointment

Individuals accustomed to bundled fees may not realise that they have already paid for services, such as consultations, earmolds, and repairs, within the bundled fee. Opting for unbundled fees can give a clearer understanding of the costs associated with each specific service.

The decision between bundled and unbundled fees depends on individual needs and circumstances. While bundled fees offer the convenience of upfront payment for anticipated services, unbundled fees allow for more flexibility and control over costs.

Even with bundled pricing, clinics are now encouraged to provide itemised bills. This helps you understand what's included and make fair comparisons between clinics.

When discussing fees, ask for:

- A breakdown of costs
- Details on what services are included
- Information on trial periods, warranties, and repairs

Sales and Commissions

Concerns have been raised regarding audiologists earning commissions based on sales, which may create a conflict of interest when providing advice. Increased transparency has been encouraged in relation to commissions paid in large clinic chains and organisations.

Transparency is improving, but it's important to remember:

- Hearing clinics are for-profit business
- You should never feel pressured to buy a hearing device
- Ask questions and choose what's right for your needs and budget

The Keys to Hearing Aid Success

Each part plays an equal role in helping you get the best out of your hearing aids:

Hearing Aid Success Equation

- **20% Hearing Aid / technology level**
 - **20% Motivation / expectation level**
 - **20% Rehabilitation & retraining of ears & brain**
 - **20% Support of family & friends**
 - **20% Support of hearing aid provider**
- = 100%**

Be an Informed Consumer

Your audiologist can help you compare hearing aids and find what suits your hearing, lifestyle, and budget. However, being informed about pricing models and asking the right questions empowers you to make confidence choices.

By understanding the cost structures, being well-informed, and knowing your consumer rights, you can navigate the process of purchasing hearing devices with confidence and make sound choices – ensuring your hearing care is transparent, fair, and tailored to you.

💡 *Remember: your hearing aid success is a joint adventure!*

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