



**HEARING MATTERS
AUSTRALIA**

Support from real life experience

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HOW DO I GET A HEARING AID?

Hearing Care is regarded as part of overall health care. The government provides free hearing services to all children and people under 21 years old. People over the age of 21 may also be eligible for free hearing services.

If you have a loss of hearing which effects your lifestyle (your ability to cope in one-to-one conversations, in social groups, when using the telephone, or listening to TV or radio) you should seek the services of well-qualified professionals.

- Consult your local doctor who will check for any medical conditions.
- If there are indications that your hearing loss may be treated medically or surgically, your doctor may refer you to a Ear, Nose & Throat Specialist
- Once it has been determined that no medical or surgical procedures would help, you should seek the services of an audiologist – a qualified professional who specialises in the non-medical treatment of hearing loss.
- An audiologist will test your ability to hear over a range of frequencies (pitches) and will make a thorough assessment of your hearing. They will advise whether you would benefit from use of a hearing aid and the most suitable type. Some audiologists will also supply and fit hearing aids – often at a cost below that quoted by commercial suppliers.
- You should be wary of advertising claims and offers of ‘special deals’ made by some commercial hearing aid suppliers.
- No matter what your income or financial circumstances, the services of a fully qualified professional audiologist are available to you.

1. YOU ARE ELIGIBLE FOR FREE HEARING ASSESSMENTS & HEARING AIDS FROM THE COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT'S AUSTRALIAN HEARING SERVICE (AHS):

- If you receive a Social Security Pension & hold a Pensioner Concession Card
- Hold a Seniors Health Card
- Are a dependant of a person who holds one of the above cards
- Receive a Veterans Affairs Pension and Hold a plastic Treatment Entitlement Card

To check your eligibility for these cards, Contact Veterans Affairs (02) 213 7777 or Department of Social Security – 13 2300 for Age Pensions or 13 2468 for all other Social Security entitlements

If you are on an overseas pension you may also be eligible for Australian Hearing Services. You should check this with the department of Social Security.

HOW TO APPLY FOR AUSTRALIAN HEARING SERVICES (AHS)

- Obtain an application from your doctor **who must sign your completed application**
- Forms can also be obtained from your nearest AHS Hearing Centre or by phoning AHS External Services Section free call 1800 813 762.
- AHS Hearing Centres are located in all metropolitan areas and in a number of country centres in all states. You can find the phone number and address of your nearest Hearing Centre in the White Pages phonebook under "Australian Hearing Services" or by calling the Australia Hearing Services Offices in each state (NSW – (02) 267 4500 & ACT (06) 257 6530)
- Hearing tests and supply and fitting of hearing aids may be provided by either an audiologist at an AHS Hearing Centre or an accredited private provider – an Audiologist or Audiometrist in private practice or working with a commercial hearing aid supplier – who has been accredited by AHS to provide the service.
- A yearly charge of \$43-89 is made for aid maintenance & supply of batteries.

2. IF YOU ARE OF WORKING AGE AND A LOSS OF HEARING IS LIMITING YOUR JOB PROSPECTS:

You may be able to obtain help through the Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service (CRS). If eligible, you will be referred to Australian Hearing Services for free testing and fitting of Hearing Aids. CRS also offers help in retraining and finding appropriate employment.

3. IF YOU ARE NOT ELIGIBLE FOR GOVERNMENT HEARING SERVICES AND MUST PURCHASE A HEARING AID, YOUR OPTIONS ARE:

AUDIOLOGY DEPARTMENTS IN MAJOR PUBLIC HOSPITALS

Hearing tests are available to all adults, regardless of income. In general, clients are limited to those living in the area served by each hospital but some hospitals have no restriction. Some hospitals may require a doctor's referral.

There is usually no charge for hearing assessments carried out in public hospitals. The exception is when the assessment is related to a claim for compensation for loss of hearing. In this case, the service is not covered by Medicare and a charge will be made.

Hearing Aids are generally not available through hospital audiology departments, but there are exceptions – check with the hospital. Where aids are supplied, you should enquire whether prescribed and fitted by the audiologist, or by a private supplier on contract to the hospital.

Sydney Metropolitan Hospitals:

Prince of Wales	High St, Randwick	(02) 93822274
Royal North Shore	Pacific Highway, St Leonards	(02) 9463 1428
Royal Prince Alfred	Missenden Rd, Camperdown	(02) 9515 7531
Westmead	Darcy Rd, Westmead	(02) 8890 7479