

QUESTIONS TO ASK AN AUDIOLOGIST/HEARING AID DISPENSER BEFORE BUYING HEARING DEVICES

How many different brands and types of hearing aids do you sell?

A dispenser should have several different brands and types of hearing aids from which to choose. No single brand or type of aid amplifies sound adequately for every hearing loss.

Do you offer a trial period?

All dispensers should offer a trial period during which the hearing aid is returnable. The trial period is usually 30 days. Some dispensers require a deposit or payment prior to the trial period. If the hearing aid is returned, many hearing aid dispensers will charge a nonrefundable "restocking fee." The cost of the hearing aid itself should be refundable during the trial period; however, the restocking fee covers the visit fees for selection and fitting.

What is included in the cost of the hearing aid?

The cost depends on the sophistication of the hearing aid circuitry—more automated instruments usually cost more. Smaller hearing aids are usually more expensive than larger aids, but not always. Usually, the professional fees to select and fit the hearing aids are included in the retail price. The cost of these visits may not be refundable if hearing aids are returned (see restocking fee above). Follow-up visits after the trial period may be included in the retail price of the hearing aids or billed separately.

Do the hearing aids have warranty coverage?

Most manufacturers include a standard 1 year warranty for repairs and one-time replacement due to loss or damage. Some dispensers may add a 2nd year of coverage. If an aid is lost, manufacturers will replace it one time during the warranty period; however, they usually charge a processing fee of approximately \$150, which is similar to a deductible. Warranties can usually be extended for an additional charge, if the aids are under 4-5 years old.

What does it cost to repair an aid once its warranty has expired?

Out-of warranty repair charges are the responsibility of the hearing aid owner and in some cases can cost nearly \$200. For most hearing aid repairs there is a standard charge that covers repair on the circuitry or electrical components. After the repair, a warranty on the fixed components should be issued for a period of 6 or 12 months.

Can you fix my hearing aid in the office? If not, do you have loaner devices I can use while mine are being repaired?

Most dispensers will try to repair the aid in-house, but the repairs they cannot do themselves are sent to the manufacturer or a company that repairs hearing aids. Ask if a loaner device is available if yours needs to be sent in for repair.