

» FUNDING OPTIONS FOR HEARING AIDS

Hearing aid purchase and fitting for adults is not currently included in British Columbia's Medical Service Plan; however, there are some funding options available for hearing loss testing, hearing aid fitting and purchase for adults.

- **WorkSafeBC** provides full coverage if your hearing loss resulted from occupational noise exposure and you have an approved claim.
- **Veterans' Affairs Canada** provides full coverage if you are a registered Canadian veteran and have an approved claim.
- **First Nations Health Authority Health Benefits Program** provides full coverage for First Nations' individuals that have a Canadian status and are considered a resident of BC.
- **The Ministry of Social Development & Social Innovation** provides coverage for up to \$4000 for a pair of hearing aid, appropriate medical devices to persons with disabilities that are receiving disability assistance.
- **Extended Health Benefit Packages** often provide coverage, ranging from \$500-\$700 per person every 5 years.
- **The Western Institute for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing** provides older, donated and refurbished hearing aids at a reduced cost, although supply is often limited.
- **Technology@Work** provides limited coverage if they are needed to help you find or retain employment.
- **Service Clubs and Community Groups** such as Rotary, Elks, Kiwanis or Lions Clubs often have limited funding they provide to individuals on a case by case basis.

» WHAT TO CONSIDER WHEN PURCHASING A HEARING AID

A pair of hearing aids range in cost from approximately \$1000 to \$7000.

The cost of hearing aids are determined by their technology level and/or the inclusion of advanced features. Costs will also include the types of extended services provided by your hearing care professional, such as routine follow up testing, programming adjustments, new batteries and more.

These services could add up significantly if not included in the price of the hearing aids.

Because prices can vary significantly, we recommend considering a range of other factors when choosing a hearing aid, **including ensuring your chosen professional...**

- Is registered with the College of Speech and Hearing Professionals of British Columbia. You can check this at cshhpbcc.org.
- Is able to supply hearing aids from a variety of manufacturers, rather than just one.
- Makes you feel comfortable.
- Works from a place that is convenient for you to visit. You will need a number of follow-up visits when you are initially fitted with hearing aids to make adjustments.
- Offers a trial period in which you can test the hearing aid before you purchase. Longer trials are not necessarily better: ideally you will be able to test the product for a few weeks, after which time you will likely know whether it is right for you.
- Understanding your hearing loss and determining the best solution can be challenging. Exceptional customer service and care should be a clinic's main focus.

» AUDIOLOGISTS AND HEARING INSTRUMENT PRACTITIONERS: WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE?

There are two types of hearing professionals: audiologists and hearing instrument practitioners. Both are qualified professionals with slightly different scopes of practice.

How do you know which one to work with?

Both audiologists and hearing instrument practitioners can conduct hearing aid tests with adults for the purposes of dispensing hearing aids.

And, anyone dispensing hearing aids must be regulated hearing instrument practitioners.

Audiologists in BC have additional training which enables them to provide an extended scope of practice.

For example, they can provide further diagnostic testing for other types of hearing disorders such as auditory processing disorders or hyperacusis (hypersensitivity to pitch or volume of certain sounds), tinnitus and balance disorders. Audiologists are also trained in counselling and (re)habilitation.

In deciding what professional to work with, it's useful to consider not only professional qualifications, but a range of other factors such as your comfort level with the individual and their proximity to your home.

We include questions to ask your consultant overleaf.

» QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR CONSULTANT:

Specifications

- Would I benefit from accessories with my device?
- Why was this device recommended over other options?
- How does this meet my individual needs?
- Is a new line of technology going to be released soon?
- Are there any reasons that I will need medical clearance before being fit with hearing aids?
- For those with tinnitus: does the hearing aid have any tinnitus support features?

Purchase Details

- What is the trial period?
- What is included in the price?
- What is the warranty?
- What happens if I lose the device?

Funding

- Is there a payment plan available?
- Are there any discounts available?
- Am I eligible for any funding support?

BEWARE OF ADVERTISEMENTS OFFERING HEARING AIDS WITHOUT TESTING OR FITTING. WEARING HEARING AIDS WITHOUT PROPER ASSESSMENT OR FITTING CAN BE EXTREMELY HARMFUL.

ABOUT BCASLPA

The ability to communicate is your bridge to the rest of the world.

The BC Association of Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology is a not for profit organization with more than 1200 member speech-language pathologists and audiologists in British Columbia.

Our vision is that everyone in British Columbia is empowered to communicate effectively with easily accessible, professional support from speech-language pathologists and audiologists.

HOW CAN WE HELP YOU?

- We provide educational resources for those wishing to find out more about a wide range of speech-language and hearing disorders, including in-depth descriptions of disorders and their symptoms.
- We connect people who have communication disorders with highly trained, certified professionals across BC who can help via our easy-to-use Find A Professional online tool.
- We distribute resources that can help with early learning and development, including speech and language milestone charts and suggested reading lists.



Visit bcaslpa.ca to find these resources and connect with us.

Audiologists, Hearing Instrument Practitioners and Speech-Language Pathologists are registered by the College of Speech and Hearing Health Professionals BC.

All You Need To Know About Hearing Aids

We will all experience some level hearing impairment as we age. Whether experiencing a chronic hearing loss or just the first signs of reduced ability, receiving treatment early can vastly improve your quality of life—and health—in the long term.

This brochure is designed to provide key information to you as you seek testing and treatment for mild to severe hearing loss.