



AR AUDIO
RECOVERY, INC
AUDIOLOGY & HEARING AID CENTER
HOUGH EAR INSTITUTE CAMPUS

Hearing Aid Buyer's Guide

How to Use this Guide

The purchase of hearing aids is a major decision. There are many factors to consider when choosing the clinic that will best meet your hearing and lifestyle needs. This buyer's guide is designed to help you understand the important factors to consider when choosing a hearing aid provider. These factors will impact you before, during and after your purchase ...and ultimately help you make the best decision for your needs.

About Audio Recovery, Inc.

The five audiologists at Audio Recovery are professionals with masters or doctoral degrees in audiology. For over 30 years, we have specialized in the evaluation of hearing loss and fitting of hearing aids in adults.

Audio Recovery's desire is to provide the best available solutions for our patients' hearing loss. We are committed to excellence in everything we do, from the quality of care we provide to the manufacturers with whom we choose to partner. Our passion is to serve and care for our patients.

How well you hear the world around you is truly crucial to the quality of your life. At Audio Recovery, we understand all the confusion that our patients face when dealing with hearing loss and purchasing hearing aids. The great news is that your hearing loss can be managed.

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Hearing Clinic / Audiologist Considerations

More than any other technology purchase, the choice of which hearing clinic to buy your aids from is critical. Excellent hearing aid technology that is programmed, fit and adjusted by people that are not experienced or qualified will produce very poor results for the patient. In this section we will take a look at key factors to consider when deciding on a hearing clinic.

Audiologist Education / Experience / Qualifications

There are two groups that are able to fit hearing aids in the state of Oklahoma - Hearing Instrument Specialists and Audiologists. Though the two jobs may seem similar, there are in fact several important differences between an Audiologist and a Hearing Instrument Specialist (HIS)

AUDIOLOGIST QUALIFICATIONS

- Prior to 1/1/07 :: Audiologist must hold at least a Masters degree in Audiology.
- After 1/1/07 :: Audiologist must hold at least an Au.D or Doctor of Audiology degree or an equivalent doctorate-level education from a regionally accredited academic institution.
- Continuing Education :: all Audiologists must complete at least 20 hours of continuing education (every two years) and must renew their license annually with the Oklahoma Board of Examiners for Speech-Language Pathology & Audiology.

HEARING INSTRUMENT SPECIALISTS (HIS)

- Must be at least 18 years of age
- Must be of good moral character
- Must have an education equivalent to a four-year course in an accredited high school
- Must have passed a written and practical examination

Clinic History / Longevity

The stability and longevity of a clinic is critical to the long-term care of its patients. Many patients are displaced every year as hearing clinics close their doors and can no longer serve their patients. Audio Recovery has been open since 1984 and has served the hearing needs of over 20,000 patients. We will be here to walk with you on your hearing journey.

Size of Staff / Clinic

Everyone gets sick or needs to take a vacation from time to time. A clinic with multiple Audiologists and/or hearing instrument specialists, ensures a redundancy in care for patients that allows them to be seen and serviced when their needs arise. Our staff of 5 audiologists are available to help our patients and cover for audiologists that may be sick or on vacation.

Independent or ENT

An independent hearing clinic is typically focused only on hearing aids and does not have MDs or ENTs closely associated with their practice. A hearing clinic that is associated with an ENT clinic has ENTs on-site to be able to provide for your total ear health. Audio Recovery partners with 5 Otolologists on-site, which allows us to provide for your total ear health.

On-Site Technician

When a clinic has a hearing aid technician that is factory trained to perform maintenance and small repairs on your hearing aids, it is a benefit to the patient that often allows for a more convenient and quick turnaround of their requests. Routine cleaning and maintenance, as well as basic repairs, can be handled at Audio Recovery by our factory- trained tech - usually within 30 minutes of your appointment.

HEARING AID MAINTENANCE - Proper care and maintenance is essential to the life and function of your hearing instruments.

Purchasing hearing aids can be a major investment for you, therefore, it is imperative that you take the necessary steps to keeping them functioning properly. Well maintained hearing instruments can last 5 to 7 years, or longer.



Pricing / Service Types

Understanding the pricing structure of the clinic you choose will enable you to have a better understanding of the total cost of hearing aid ownership. Below we will discuss Bundled, Unbundled, Partial Unbundling and Warranty Length Pricing.

Bundled Pricing: A bundled pricing model includes the cost of all of the audiological/clinical services associated with owning hearing aids for the life of those aids. This is the pricing model that we use at Audio Recovery. The purchase price of the aids includes all follow-up visits to the clinic, any hearing tests or audiograms, hearing aid programming adjustments and routine hearing aid cleaning/maintenance for the life of the hearing aids.

Unbundled Pricing: An unbundled pricing model typically separates the cost of the aids from the cost of on-going service. Often a small number of appointments (3-5) are included in the cost of the aids, then any additional visits with the audiologist, hearing tests, hearing aid programming adjustments and hearing aid maintenance visits come at an additional charge each time they are needed. This pricing model often seems attractive due to its lower initial cost, but quickly becomes more expensive as the wearer's needs/hearing changes and additional visits are required.

Partial Unbundling/Warranty Length Pricing: A partially unbundled pricing model is a mix between the two models above. The costs of on-going service, for a length of time (usually the

length of the factory warranty), are included in the cost of the hearing aids. After the factory warranty is completed, the patient pays for any additional services or office visits that are needed.

Audio Recovery offers bundled pricing - The purchase price of the aids includes all follow-up visits to the clinic, any hearing tests or audiograms, hearing aid programming adjustments and routine hearing aid cleaning/maintenance for the life of the hearing aids.



Loaner Aids

Factory repairs are sometimes needed in or out of the warranty period. Many patients are heavily dependent on their hearing aids and need to have replacement or loaner aids. When your aids are sent to the factory for repair, Audio Recovery provides loaner hearing aids programmed to your specific hearing loss.



Patient Loyalty Programs

Considering the average lifespan of hearing aids and the rate of technological advancements, it is likely that you will purchase more than one set of hearing aids during your lifetime. A good patient loyalty program should reward you when you are ready to upgrade your hearing aids with a new purchase. Audio Recovery has a patient loyalty program that rewards our patients with discounts for repeat purchases.

Number of Manufacturers Sold/Serviced

It is important to choose a clinic that is aligned and well versed with multiple manufacturers. Hearing aid manufacturers have exclusive technologies and invest heavily in researching different aspects of hearing loss. Since everyone's hearing loss and lifestyle are different, the best clinics will be able to match the right technology with your specific needs. Be wary of any clinic that only fits aids from one manufacturer. Audio Recovery works closely with three of the top hearing aid manufacturers in the world - ReSound, Phonak and Widex.



The many different manufacturers, types and levels of hearing aids make it difficult to understand what is right for you. Your audiologist will take into account your specific hearing loss, your lifestyle and your budget when they make a hearing aid recommendation. They will help make this choice easier for you. In this section we will take a look at consideration points when deciding on hearing aids.

Styles of Hearing Aids

Hearing aid technologies and form factors have changed dramatically in the last 20 years. The transition from analog technology to digital technology has made significant advances in sound quality possible. There are three main categories that most hearing aids fit into:

BEHIND THE EAR (BTE)

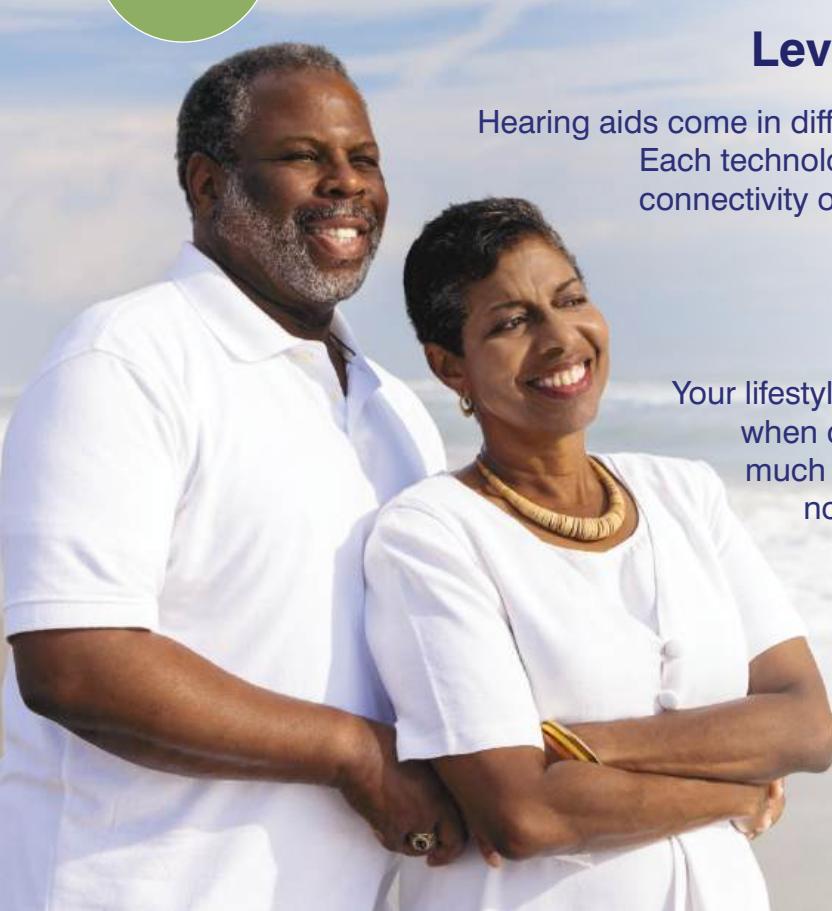
This style is easy to handle and fits comfortably behind the ear. May be appropriate for more severe hearing losses or when a custom ear mold is needed.

CUSTOM (In the ear, In the canal)

Custom hearing aids fit comfortably within the anatomy of your ear and are available in a range of styles to fit different hearing losses.

RECEIVER IN THE EAR (RIE)

This Style fits discretely behind the ear, this is the most popular style of hearing aid. Receiver in the ear models offer small size with a wide range of functionality.



Levels of Hearing Aids

Hearing aids come in different levels of technology from basic to premium.

Each technology level offers different functionality, features and connectivity options. Many of these options are directly related to your lifestyle considerations. (see below)

Lifestyle Considerations

Your lifestyle and activity level will be a point of consideration when deciding upon the right hearing aids. If you spend much time outside, a hearing aid that has a strong wind noise reduction program might be a good choice. If you often find yourself in groups trying to have conversations in noisy environments, a hearing aid that has a good speech in noise or speech focus program would be a good choice. Your audiologist will talk with you about your lifestyle and the situations in which you find it difficult to hear well and will be able to recommend hearing aids that meet your unique needs.

Hearing Loss Considerations

The type and severity of your specific hearing loss will, in large part, determine which hearing aid is best for you. For instance, a custom hearing device that is worn inside the ear canal, might not be able to provide the needed amplification for a severe or profound hearing loss. Your audiologist will suggest which aids will be most beneficial for your hearing loss.

Wireless Connectivity

Many hearing aids can now connect via Bluetooth (with or without additional accessories) to smart phones, tablets and Apps that allow greater control of hearing aid functionality. Some of these aids even allow your Audiologist to remotely adjust your settings and levels.

Manufacturer Warranties

All major hearing aid manufacturers provide warranties (repair and loss & damage) with new hearing aid purchases. A repair warranty covers repairs that are needed if any of the internal components of the hearing aid cease working properly and need repair. A loss & damage warranty covers loss of hearing aids or replacement that is needed due to some sort of damage (being run over by the car, chewed by the dog, etc.). The length of each of these warranties vary from clinic to clinic and can differ by hearing aid model as well.

Hearing Provider Checklist

		Provider 1	Provider 2	Provider 3
3 Full Service Care	Audio Recovery	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 Staff Qualifications	5 Audiologists # HIS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 Clinic History	# Auds # HIS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5 On-Site Technician	# Auds # HIS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6 All-Inclusive Pricing	# Auds # HIS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7 Loaner Hearing Aid Program	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8 Multiple Brands Carried	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11 Factory Repair Warranty	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11 Loss & Damage Warranty	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="radio"/> Batteries	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**"life of your aids" is generally 5-7 years, before changes in technology and materials make repairs ineffective.

Hearing Technology Checklist

Audiologist Name:		Provider 1*		Provider 2*		Provider 3*	
Technology Recommended:	Base Price:						
Number of Office Visits Included in Hearing Aid Price	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unlimited						\$
Cost of Office Visits	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	\$ 0.00					\$
Cost of Hearing Tests or Audiograms	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	\$ 0.00					\$
Cost of Aid Cleaning & Maintenance Visits	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	\$ 0.00					\$
Cost of Basic Repair Visits	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	\$ 0.00					\$
Cost of Loaner Aids	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	\$ 0.00					\$
Cost of Fitting Fees	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Included	\$					\$
Cost of Dispensing Fees	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None	\$					\$
Total Price:		\$					\$



3400 NW 56th St. • Suite 100
Oklahoma City, OK 73112

405-949-1906
www.AudioRecovery.com

