



Types of hearing devices

There are different types of hearing devices available to eligible clients of the Australian Government Hearing Services Program (the program). Your choice of hearing device will depend on a range of factors individual to you, including

- your hearing loss and lifestyle
- your goals and expectations for using a hearing device
- any health concerns that may impact on your successful use of hearing devices
- your preferences for hearing device styles, brands, aesthetics, and accessories

Your hearing practitioner will consider these factors when recommending hearing devices. Under the program there is a wide range of high quality hearing devices available to help you manage your hearing loss. These include hearing aids and assistive listening devices.

Do I have to pay for a hearing device?

If you are eligible for the program and you have a hearing loss, you will be offered a fully subsidised digital hearing device by your hearing practitioner. These devices come in different styles and contain a range of beneficial features.

You may choose to purchase a partially subsidised hearing device, to access additional features. In this case, the program contributes the amount that would have been paid to your service provider had you been fitted with a fully subsidised hearing device, and you pay the additional amount quoted to you for the hearing device (i.e. the “gap”).

What are the different types of hearing aids?

Hearing aids come in a range of sizes, shapes and styles. The following is a description of the types of fully subsidised hearing aids available through the program.

Type of hearing aid	Example of hearing aid
<p>Behind-the-ear (BTE)</p> <p>The hearing aid sits toward the top of your outer ear (behind your ear) and is attached by a tube to an ear mould sitting inside the bowl of your outer ear and into your ear canal. Sound travels from the hearing aid, through the ear mould and into your ear canal. These hearing aids are discreet, and are easy to clean and maintain.</p>	
<p>High powered BTE</p> <p>These hearing aids are more powerful, for people who have a severe to profound hearing loss. They are often larger than other BTE hearing aids, as they require a larger battery.</p>	

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<p>Open fit BTE</p> <p>These hearing aids have a specially designed ear piece with very thin tubing which directs sound from the hearing aid into the ear canal. This type of hearing aid is useful for people who have good hearing for low pitch sounds, or who cannot wear an ear mould.</p>	
<p>In-the-canal (ITC) and in-the-ear (ITE)</p> <p>The main part of these hearing aids sits in the bowl of the outer ear, with a portion extending into the ear canal to direct the sound into your ear. ITE hearing aids are more powerful than ITC hearing aids, and are slightly larger.</p> <p>ITC and ITEs are not suitable for all levels of hearing loss, or for people who have ear infections. In general, they are more vulnerable to wax damage and wear and tear than BTE hearing aids. Because of their smaller size, they may be harder to clean and maintain for those who have difficulty using their hands, however, can also be easier to insert for some people than BTEs.</p>	
<p>Completely in the canal (CIC)</p> <p>These are small and sit deeply in the ear canal. Due to their size, they may have less variety of features or power than the other styles of hearing aids. They are not suitable for all levels of hearing loss and may not be suitable for people with very narrow or 'bendy' ear canals, or those who have difficulty using their hands.</p> <p>Like ITC or ITE hearing aids, CIC hearing aids are more vulnerable to damage from wax and the conditions of your ear canal.</p>	

Other types of hearing aids available

These are less commonly fitted and include body aids, bone conduction hearing aids, spectacle aids, contralateral routing of signal (CROS) aids, or bilateral contralateral routing of signal (BiCROS) aids. Your hearing practitioner will discuss these with you if necessary.

What is an Assistive Listening Device (ALD)?

An ALD is a different type of hearing device, generally used by people when they only want help with hearing one main type of situation.

For example, an ALD such as a set of headphones for the radio or television could be useful if the only time you feel you need help with your hearing loss is when you want to listen to the television/radio at a level which is comfortable for others.

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Alternatively, you may not be able to use or manage hearing aids, but could benefit from a personal amplifier, to help you listen to one person.

ALDs are generally larger and have bigger controls, so they can be ideal for people who have a disability or who otherwise have difficulties managing a much smaller hearing aid. Through the program, you can be fitted with a hearing aid or an ALD. Your hearing practitioner can discuss with you if an ALD is suitable for you.

Where can I get more information?

If you have questions, speak with your hearing practitioner and ask for written information (such as brochures and pamphlets) so you can consider the information you have been given. Support services such as [Better Hearing Australia](#) and the [Deafness Forum of Australia](#) can also provide further information.

Our [Useful Links](#) section will also guide you to further resources for information and support.

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