

30-day Warranty: The California Song-Beverly Consumer Warranty Act provides a 30-day warranty on all new and used hearing aids sold in California. If the hearing aid is not specifically fit for the buyer's particular needs, the device may be returned to the hearing aid dispenser within 30 days of the date of



actual receipt by the buyer or completion of fitting by the seller, whichever occurs later. If the buyer returns the device, the seller must either adjust or replace the device or promptly refund the total

amount paid. If the buyer returns the device within the 30-day period, the seller is required, without charge and within a reasonable time, to adjust, repair, or replace the device. If, after the adjustment, repair, or replacement, the device is still not specifically fit for the buyer's particular needs, the device may be returned for a refund of the total amount paid including all payments and any trade-in exchanged as part of the transaction.

Receipt Requirements: Your hearing aid dispenser must provide the following information on your hearing aid receipt:

- The date the sale is concluded.
- The make, serial number, and model of the hearing aid.
- The dispenser's business address and the office hours for fitting or post-fitting adjustments.
- Information about whether the aid is used or reconditioned.
- The license number of the professional selling the aid.
- California Song-Beverly Consumer Warranty Act provisions.

Hearing aid technology is developing rapidly and provides a range of new options and opportunities for hearing-impaired persons. If you are hearing-impaired, a good hearing aid may greatly enhance your well-being. We wish you success in selecting a hearing aid and in using it to maximum benefit.

COMPLAINTS

The Hearing Aid Dispensers Bureau and the Department of Consumer Affairs are here to help Californians be careful consumers and to protect them from unscrupulous and unqualified individuals. Complaints against hearing aid dispensers are handled by the Department of Consumer Affairs' Complaint Resolution Program. Complaints may be filed online at www.dca.ca.gov, or forwarded to:

Hearing Aid Dispensers Bureau
1625 N. Market Blvd., Ste. S-209
Sacramento, CA 95834
(916) 574-7990 | www.dca.ca.gov/hearingaid

If you have additional questions, please call the Hearing Aid Dispensers Bureau at (916) 574-7990. We cannot recommend a hearing aid or hearing aid dispenser, but other assistance will be provided.

OTHER RESOURCES

The Hearing HealthCare Providers/California is a professional association that can mediate complaints and has an ethics committee in both Northern and Southern California. The contact information for that association is:

1121 L Street, Suite 409
Sacramento, CA 95814
(916) 447-1975

The California Academy of Audiology is organized for the purpose of promoting the public good by fostering the growth, development, recognition and status of the profession of audiology and its members. Contact:

4640 Admiralty Way, Suite 406
Marina del Rey, CA 90292
(310) 821-6179

HEARING AID DISPENSERS BUREAU
www.dca.ca.gov/hearingaid

Sound Advice ON Hearing Aids



A Guide to
Selecting and
Purchasing
Hearing Aids

(916) 574-7990

dca | DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS



Hearing Aid Dispensers Bureau
P.O. Box 980490
West Sacramento, CA 95798-0490

Many hearing aid options are available to you. This guide offers assistance in selecting and purchasing your hearing aid.

What is a Hearing Aid?

A hearing aid is a wearable device designed for the purpose of aiding or compensating for impaired hearing. There are many styles of hearing aids available. No single hearing instrument is suitable for all types of hearing loss.

Do You Need a Hearing Aid?



See a physician or audiologist to have your hearing tested. If a hearing aid is recommended, we recommend that you see a physician to determine that your hearing loss cannot be

helped medically or that you do not have a physical or medical condition that rules out the use of hearing aids for you. Your hearing aid dispenser will perform hearing tests for the purpose of fitting your hearing aid.

Choosing a Hearing Aid Dispenser

A hearing aid dispenser, also called a hearing aid specialist, can help you find the right device. Your hearing aid dispenser will not only test your hearing and help you select a proper hearing device, but also offer you support and instruction while you learn to use it. Here are a few tips to help you locate a dispenser:

- Ask friends for their recommendations.
- Senior citizens may wish to check with senior citizen clubs and organizations.
- Call the Hearing Aid Dispensers Bureau to verify whether the dispenser has a valid license at (916) 574-7990.
- Check with the Better Business Bureau on any complaints that may have been filed.

Choosing a licensed hearing aid professional is important. This professional may be a hearing aid dispenser, a dispensing audiologist, or a physician licensed as a hearing aid dispenser. What are the differences? A hearing aid dispenser will test your hearing and help you decide on the right hearing aid. A dispensing audiologist is licensed both as an audiologist and a hearing aid dispenser, and a physician dispenser has a medical license and a hearing aid dispenser's license. In order to be licensed, these professionals had to pass written and practical examinations to prove their knowledge and competence meets the standards mandated by the State of California.

Selecting a Hearing Aid

Hearing aids often require a significant financial investment—take your time choosing the right one for you. Prices vary greatly. You can work with your hearing aid dispenser to choose the aid or aids that will give you the best results. Your main goal should be to select a hearing aid that will provide the most effective assistance for your hearing impairment.



When selecting a hearing aid, you should consider the severity of your hearing loss, the factors that caused the loss, and what the options are for your particular loss.

If you are a candidate for a hearing aid, a licensed hearing aid dispenser will consider your occupation, lifestyle, environment, and any physical limitation you might have before recommending a particular type of hearing aid. Questions to ask yourself before you select and purchase a hearing aid are:

- Does the aid help me better understand speech in most of my listening environments?
- Is it comfortable to wear?
- Are the controls easy to handle?
- Do I fully understand the contract I will sign with the dispenser?
- Are all costs clearly itemized in the contract?

- Does my contract clearly state my rights if the hearing aid I buy is not suitable for me or is faulty?
- Will the dispenser be readily available to assist and counsel me after I receive the hearing aid?
- Does it fit correctly?

Mail Order/Internet Purchases (Buyer Beware)

California law provides that hearing aids purchased through mail order and the Internet be purchased only through California licensed dispensers. If you purchase a hearing aid through the mail or over the Internet, **BEWARE:**

- There is no fitting, selection, or adaptation of the hearing aid by a licensed dispenser.
- It may not fit correctly.
- Follow-up evaluations are often necessary to ensure the hearing aid fits correctly. These evaluations are not available with mail order or Internet purchases.
- It may be difficult to get a refund from an out-of-state seller.

The Hearing Aid Dispensers Bureau

The Hearing Aid Dispensers Bureau, part of the Department of Consumer Affairs, licenses and regulates hearing aid dispensers. The Bureau acts as a resource for California consumers, provides license status, investigates consumer



complaints, and enforces hearing aid laws and regulations. Please visit the Bureau's Web site for additional information at www.dca.ca.gov/hearingaid or contact us at (916) 574-7990.

Contracts and Warranties

Three-day Cancellation: If you sign a contract in your home, federal regulations and state laws require that the contract must include a provision stating that you may cancel it for any reason by midnight of the third business day.

THINGS TO REMEMBER

- Read your sales contract carefully. Make sure you understand everything. Your signature on a contract is your commitment to fulfill the terms of that contract. Take someone with you to give a second review of the contract.
- Verify whether your dispenser has a current and valid license. The Bureau can also tell you if there are any disciplinary actions filed against the hearing aid dispenser.
- A properly fitted hearing aid can amplify sound and enrich your life, but it cannot restore permanently lost hearing, prevent further hearing loss, or cure dizzy spells.
- If you see hearing aid advertising that sounds too good to be true, it probably is. Apply good judgment when evaluating advertisements about hearing aids.
- Be cautious about any signs of high sales pressure techniques.
- Choose a hearing aid dispenser who treats you with respect, and do not purchase a hearing aid from a dispenser if he or she intimidates you.
- Be wary if a hearing aid dispenser tries to discourage you from seeing a physician.
- Don't be pressured into purchasing a hearing aid or signing a contract.
- Before you complete your purchase, be certain your contract specifies the refund and warranty provisions.
- Financial assistance may be available. If your hearing aid dispenser is unable to direct you to a source of financial assistance, you may write or call your local United Way, Medi-Cal, the Veteran's Administration, the California Department of Health Services, or contact the Bureau.