

# How to buy a hearing aid

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**B**EFORE CHOOSING a hearing aid, there are a number of factors to consider. Most of these depend on the specific characteristics of your hearing loss, while others are personal.

Either way, your hearing care professional will be able to recommend a solution and help you make the right choice.

### Three physical factors

Consider these factors:

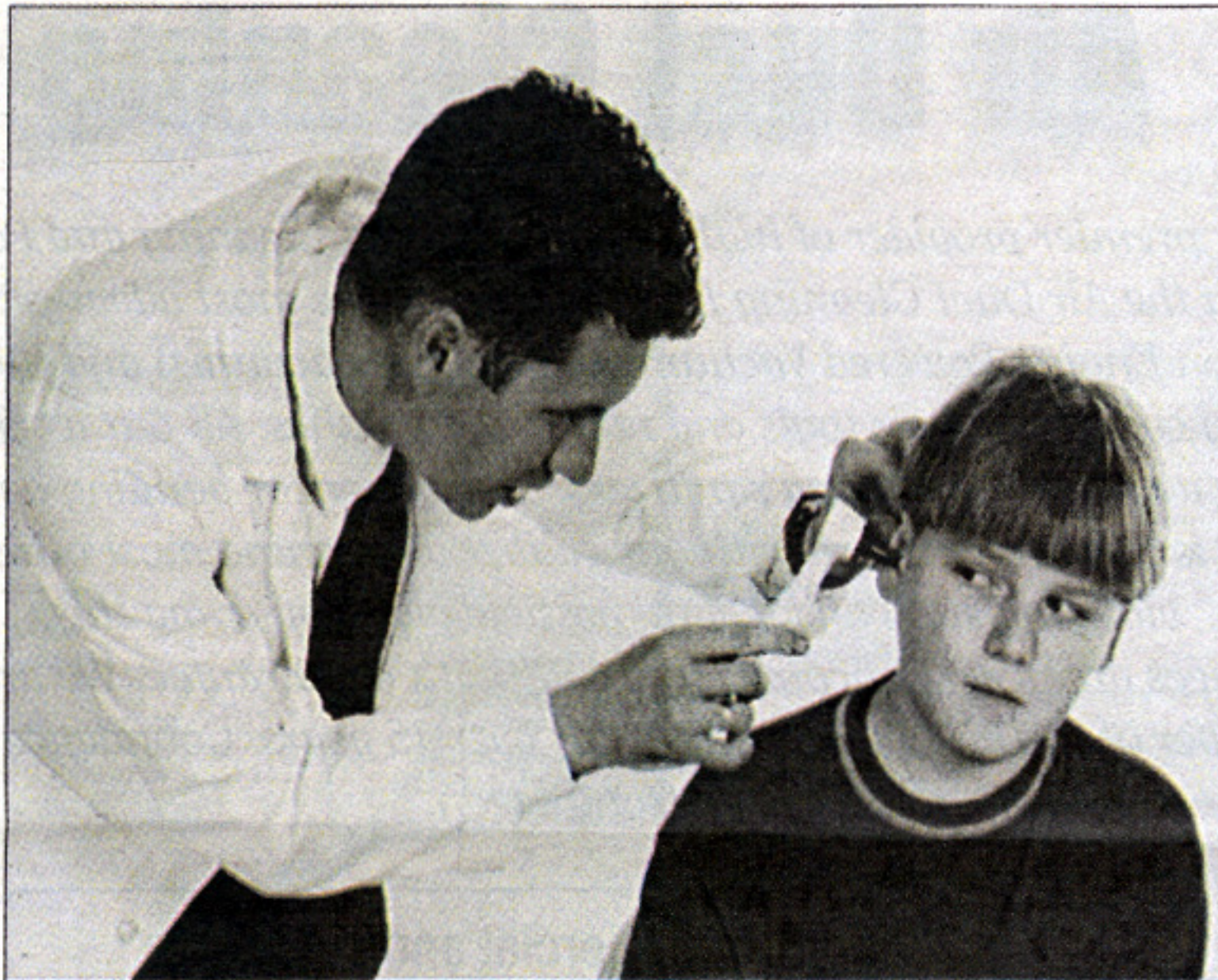
- **The degree of your hearing loss:** Your hearing care professional will examine you to determine the exact degree and type of your hearing loss. If, for example, you have a severe hearing loss, a Behind-the-Ear (BTE) instrument might be the most appropriate choice, as it can provide more powerful amplification.

- **The anatomy of your ear:** The space inside our ears varies from person to person. Most ears are big enough for In-the-Ear hearing aids, but may not always be large enough to accommodate the smallest types that fit deep into the ear canal.

- **Do you need two hearing instruments?** Two ears are always better than one, so if you have a hearing loss in both ears, you should consider wearing two hearing aids. Not because they make things twice as loud, but because — by mimicking the natural hearing process — they give you a better sense of where the sound is coming from. They also make it easier to understand what people are saying in noisy surroundings. Compared to one instrument, the overall sound quality and comfort from two is usually better.

### A hearing instrument as individual as you are

Hearing losses are very individual and can vary from person to person. Fortunately, most hearing losses



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today can be helped with hearing instruments.

Your hearing care professional has a whole range of hearing instruments, from basic to the most sophisticated. He or she will help you select the model that is best suited to your needs.

### Five personal factors

Follow these steps to get what you want. When selecting hearing aids, you should also consider your own personal needs.

- **Communication needs:** Take some time to think about the situations where you would like to improve your hearing. When and where do you need extra help? What are your requirements at work and at home

and what are your favorite leisure activities — including the ones you stopped doing because of communication problems?

If you clearly define these requirements, your hearing care professional will be able to help you find an appropriate solution.

- **Handling:** The smaller the instrument, the smaller the controls and batteries. So if your eyes are not what they used to be, or your fingers cannot cope with adjusting small controls, you will find larger instruments easier to handle.

- **Cosmetics:** Hearing aids are available in a wide variety of sizes and colors to suit your own personal taste. You may want something discrete like an in-the-canal, or

behind-the-ear model in a color which closely matches your hair or skin tone.

Many children prefer to wear brightly colored behind-the-ear instruments. Either way, your hearing care professional can help you find the style that suits you best.

- **Price:** Better hearing means a better quality of life, so it should be viewed as an investment in yourself and your health. No matter what your health, no matter what your budget is, you should be able to find hearing aids that meet your personal requirements. Hearing aids come in different price ranges. So remember to explore all the options together with your hearing care professional before making your final decision.

- **Sound quality:** Technology is everywhere today, helping to solve people's problems. It certainly has improved the size and performance of hearing aids. Some of the most sophisticated instruments today are digital, running on powerful computer microchips to provide the best possible sound quality.

### Choose your hearing instrument specialist

**carefully.**

Although anyone with a state license can perform a basic hearing test, experience makes a big difference. There are several brands and types of hearing instruments, and a true specialist is going to work with more than one company.

A truly experienced specialist knows not every patient's needs are the same. The best hearing aid is the one that's best for you. If someone advertises a price on a hearing aid, ask yourself, "How can they give a price without testing my hearing or knowing my needs?"

Be careful. If you are not comfortable with the specialist, get a second opinion.