



Fully subsidised devices

Clients of the Hearing Services Program (the program) are eligible to be fitted with high quality fully subsidised hearing devices where a hearing device is clinically required.

The hearing devices available under the program at no cost to the client include

- high powered behind the ear (BTE) devices
- BTE devices
- open ear devices
- in-the-ear (ITE) devices, and
- in-the-canal (ITC) devices.

The following hearing devices are also provided fully subsidised under the program, however, are not fitted routinely

- body aids
- bone-conductor aids and
- contralateral Routing of Signal (CROS) & Bilateral Contralateral Routing of Signal (BiCROS) aids.

Assistive Listening Devices (ALDs) are also available. ALDs are hearing devices which can help you hear in particular situations. These devices include personal amplifiers and headphones for the television or radio. It is important to work with your hearing practitioner when deciding upon a device.

Your hearing practitioner can recommend suitable hearing devices and help you to make an informed decision about the device you choose to be fitted with.

The fully subsidised schedule of approved devices

The hearing devices available under the program have been approved by the Department of Health (the Department) to be fitted to clients. This means that the manufacturer of the hearing devices has shown the technology in the devices meets a range of minimum specifications and the manufacturer is able to distribute and repair these devices as required.

These devices are listed in the Main Schedule for Approved Devices and sorted into categories according to the type of hearing aid. Please find below a description of the three categories of approved hearing devices available to clients of the program.

Category 1 (C1) devices

Devices in this category are high-powered BTE hearing aids, suitable for people with a severe to profound level of hearing loss.

BTE hearing aids consist of a plastic case which sits behind the ear and contains the electronic components of the hearing aid. To carry the sound from the electronic part of the hearing aid into the ear, a tube runs down the front of the ear and into an ear mould which sits in the ear canal and bowl of the outer ear.

Category 2 (C2) devices

Devices in this category are BTE hearing aids suitable for a wide range of hearing loss, generally within the mild to severe range.

Besides the traditional style of BTEs described above, this category also includes open-ear hearing aids. These aids can also be known by a variety of other names, such as open-fit or slim-fit devices. They consist of a small plastic case which sits behind the ear, containing the electronic parts, and a thin tube that runs into the canal with a soft tip or mould on the end. This style of hearing aid is generally suitable for mild to moderate hearing losses, particularly sloping hearing losses, where there is a hearing loss for high pitch sounds but good low pitch hearing.

Category 3 (C3) devices

This category includes ITC and ITE hearing aids, where the hearing aid itself sits in the ear canal and the bowl of the outer ear. These aids are suitable for hearing losses in the mild to severe range. These aids can be limited in the amount of volume they can provide and are not suitable for all people, as the ear canal needs to be the right shape and large enough to fit the hearing aid.

As these types of hearing aids are small in the size and therefore limited in the level of power and volume able to be generated, they are not suitable for all types of hearing loss.

They can also be more difficult to manage than BTE aids due to their smaller controls.

As mentioned above, it is important to discuss the suitable types of hearing aids available for your hearing loss, goals and your ability to manage certain types of aids with your hearing practitioner.

Non-standard (NS) devices

This category includes a range of hearing devices to help those people who have a hearing loss but cannot wear or manage hearing aids, or for whom conventional hearing aids are not suitable. The types of hearing devices in this category include ALDs, CROS and BiCROS devices.

Please read the Types of Hearing Devices information sheet below for more information about the different styles of hearing aids.

Hearing device features

Features available in free-to-client hearing devices on the Main Schedule of Approved Devices may include

- **Feedback cancellation** - this feature reduces the chance that your hearing device will whistle when it is placed in your ear. This whistling is called feedback
- **Adaptive noise reduction** - the hearing device software enables it to reduce the volume of background noise without reducing the volume of people talking. This makes it more comfortable to listen well in noisy spaces
- **Transient noise reduction** - the hearing device software recognises sudden uncomfortably loud sounds and reduces their volume to a more comfortable listening level
- **Wireless connectivity** - the hearing device software can provide a direct wireless connection to other devices. An example of this is a signal sent via bluetooth to a mobile phone, or hearing aids that synchronise the settings between left and right so the sound feels balanced to you
- **Automatic or adaptive directional microphones** - this hearing device feature emphasises sounds coming from one direction (usually the front) while reducing the volume of sounds coming from other directions. This feature makes it easier

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for you to hear one person talking when you are in a noisy space and has been clinically proven to help improve speech understanding

- **Automatic multi-memory** - the device can store a number of program settings for use in different listening situations, such as meetings or social functions
- **Telecoil (also called a T-switch)** - this hearing device feature helps you to hear better in places where an induction loop is fitted. This is often in theatres, churches and halls, as well as some businesses including banks. When this system is activated the device microphone is often switched off which helps to reduce background noise and make the speaker's voice more audible, and
- **Autophone** - the telecoil is activated automatically when the hearing device is used with a telephone which has a magnetic device attached. This magnetic device may be available as part of your hearing aid fitting.