

Your Guide to Greater Hearing Health



totalcare
H E A R I N G



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“The problems of deafness are deeper and more complex, if not more important than those of blindness. Deafness is a much worse misfortune. For it means the loss of the most vital stimulus - the sound of the voice that brings language, sets thoughts astir, and keeps us in the intellectual company of man.”

Helen Keller

Helen Adams Keller was an American author, political activist, and lecturer. She was the first deaf-blind person to earn a Bachelor of Arts degree.

About Totalcare Hearing

At Totalcare Hearing, our goal is to provide you with clear, experienced advice on your hearing, and dedicated support to find a hearing solution that's right for you.

Above all, we pride ourselves on delivering the highest standard of customer care and a truly personal service throughout your journey to better hearing.

Our audiologists keep their knowledge and skills current on the latest hearing research and modern hearing aid technology so that they can advise and support you on your hearing health. They are available to answer your questions and provide professional, independent advice and second opinions.

Advice Custom To You

Your hearing is as unique as your fingerprint. Hearing aid prescription is not a one-size-fits-all, or what works for your friend will work for you. At Totalcare Hearing, our audiologists base their prescription and advice that considers your hearing loss, lifestyle, health, budget and what you want to achieve with your hearing outcome.

Once hearing aids are prescribed, fine tuning and adjustments are needed and this skill and experience to understand your hearing needs and the capability of the device is what our audiologist brings to you that is more than pressing buttons and clicking the mouse.

A no obligation, take-home trial

If you are experiencing hearing loss and want to find out whether hearing aids can help, you might like to try a no obligation take home trial of the latest hearing aid technology.

Our Services:

- Adult & child hearing assessments
- Hearing aid discussion, quotation and fitting
- Government funded Hearing Services Program for pensioner and veterans
- Microsuction ear wax removal
- Tinnitus maskers and management
- Aftercare and follow up services
- Repairs and maintenance coordination
- Hearing aid batteries and consumables
- Workcover assessments and hearing device fitting and rehabilitation
- Auditory Processing Disorder diagnosis and management
- ALD's (Assisted Listening Devices)
- Tinnitus maskers and management

Your Journey to Greater Hearing

For most of us, hearing is something we take for granted. In fact, it is often not until we start to experience difficulty with our hearing that we appreciate just how precious our hearing is.

Whether catching up with friends at a café or speaking to family on the phone, our hearing is what keeps us connected to our loved ones and the people around us. This is why hearing loss can be such an isolating experience.

Typically, hearing loss occurs gradually and is often not even noticed at first. We tend to explain away the initial symptoms without realising we may be experiencing hearing loss.



“

I don't know why they make these places so noisy – it's impossible for anyone to hear!

”

But as the hearing loss progresses, we start to notice other symptoms - people sound like they are mumbling and the TV volume always needs to be turned up. It is at this stage we begin to acknowledge that our symptoms may be due to hearing loss - and this is when we can begin our journey to better hearing.

The first step in this journey is gathering information.

This booklet provides easy-to-understand information on hearing, hearing loss and hearing aids, to help you make an informed decision on what to do next.

Once you have a clearer understanding of hearing and the options available to you, you will be ready to consult a hearing specialist, who can help you take the next steps to better hearing.

Facts & Figures About Hearing

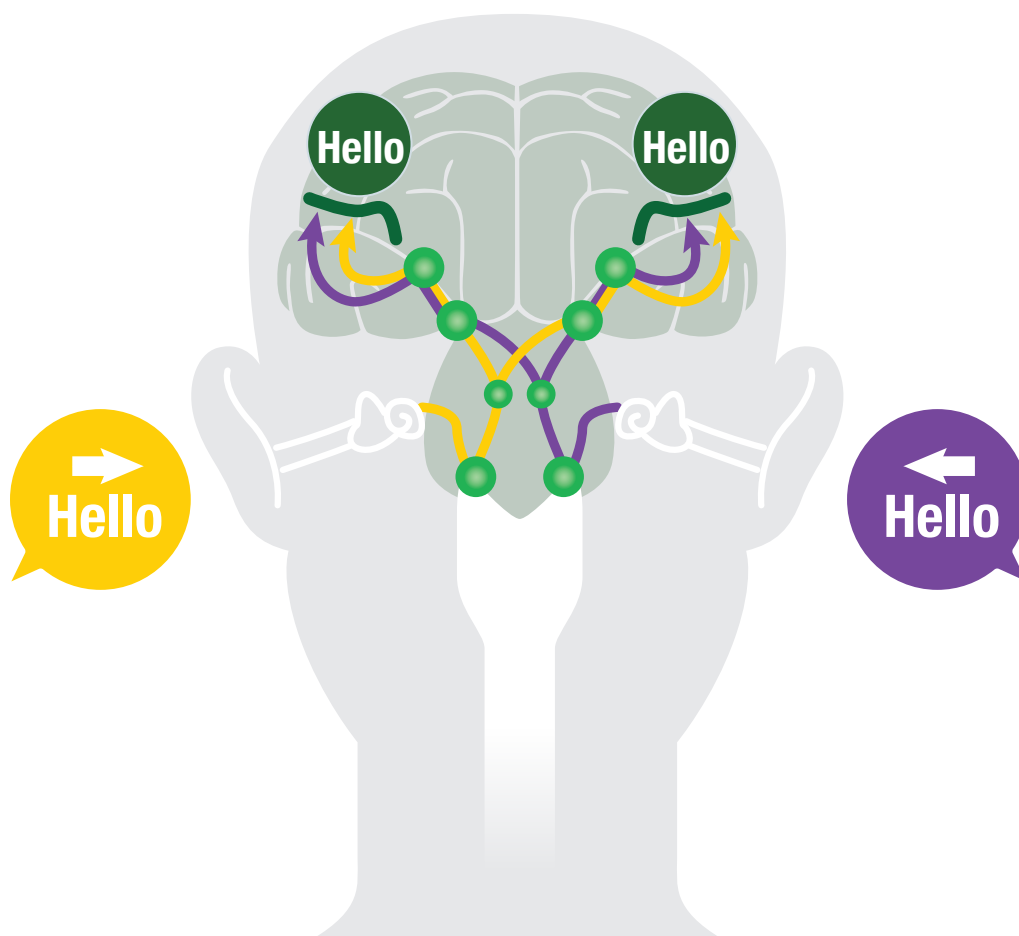
Hearing and Our Brains

When we are born, our brain can only make basic distinctions about the sounds it hears – for example, a newborn baby will be startled by a sudden loud noise, but won't be able to distinguish other sounds.

However, it doesn't take long for our brain to develop 'auditory maps' to interpret the different sounds it hears. By the age of eight, we are capable of focusing in on one particular voice, even in a noisy room.

The way our brain interprets sound is called auditory processing – and the better we are at processing sounds, the better we can hear.

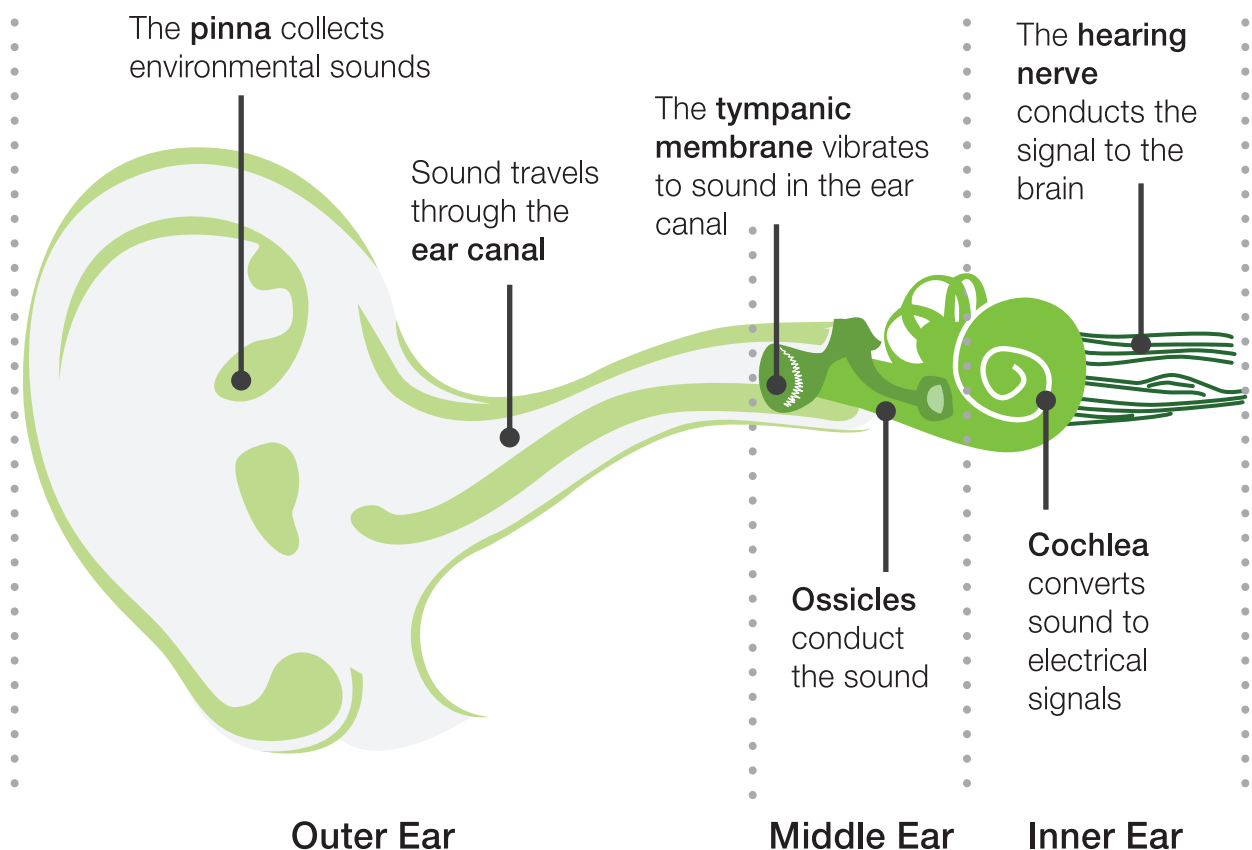
Hearing loss can affect our auditory processing ability, as it reduces the amount of information that travels from our ears to our brain. This makes it difficult to do things like follow a conversation in a place with lots of background noise.



Facts & Figures About Hearing

How Does Sound Reach Our Brains?

- 1 Sound travels through the ear canal of the outer ear, where it impacts the ear drum.
- 2 The sound causes the bones of the middle ear to vibrate, which in turn stimulates sensory hair cells in the cochlea of the inner ear.
- 3 The hair cells turn the sound waves into nerve impulses that are sent to the brain, which will then determine the sound.



Hearing Loss Facts

- ▶ Hearing loss is the second most common health issue in the world.
- ▶ Hearing loss affects more people than Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, epilepsy, and diabetes combined.



1 in 6
Australians has
a hearing impairment



1 in 3
people over the age of 65
suffers from hearing loss

Despite being a very common issue, hearing loss remains a condition that people are reluctant to accept – even today, there is still a social stigma around it.

However, it shouldn't be this way. Hearing, just like any other part of our body, deteriorates as we age. What's more, hearing loss is something that most of us may experience at some point in our lives.

What Causes Hearing Loss?

Hearing loss can be caused by a variety of factors. The most common causes of hearing loss are:

head injuries
noise exposure
birth defects **Age** genetics
ototoxic medication

Age-Related Hearing Loss

Hearing loss due to age is called **presbycusis**. Presbycusis often starts to affect people aged in their late 50s to early 60s.

Higher sound frequencies are the most affected by age-related hearing loss, which can make it difficult to hear **soft consonant speech** and **conversations in places with background noise**.

Difficulties hearing soft consonant speech can make it seem as though people are mumbling:

The quick brown
fox jumps over the
lazy dogs

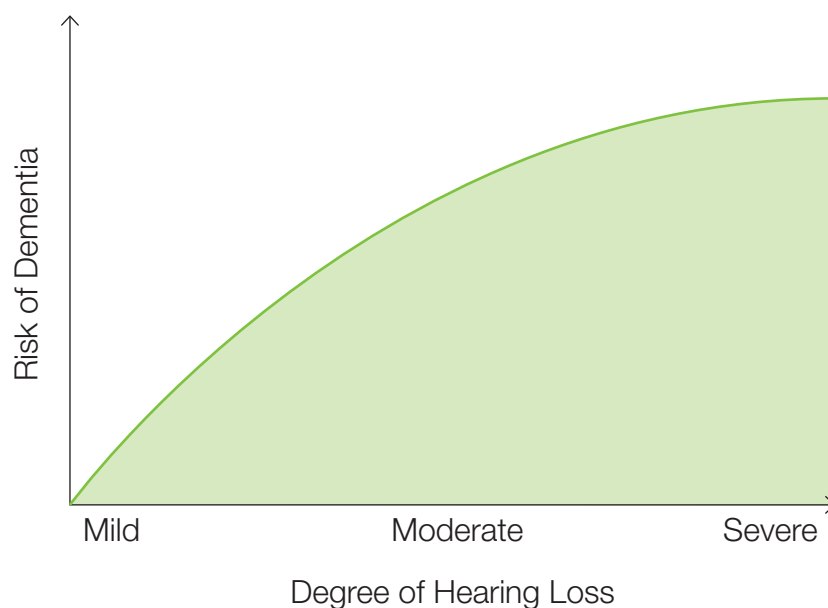
Conversation can become easily hidden by background noise:

The quick brown
fox jumps over the
lazy dogs

The Link Between Hearing Loss and Dementia

Untreated hearing loss has been linked with cognitive decline and dementia. This risk increases with the degree (severity) of hearing loss.

As the effects of hearing loss increase with age, elderly people are more at risk of dementia, even with mild hearing losses.



Greater Hearing Leads to More Independent Living

Hearing loss has been linked to **social isolation**, **depression** and even **increased risk of falling** in the elderly.

However, there is growing evidence to show that the use of hearing aids can reduce these issues, as well as decrease cognitive decline and dementia.



2012 study found a
3x greater risk
of falling in elderly with hearing loss



People with hearing loss are at a greater
risk of **depression** and
social isolation

By using hearing aids, people experiencing hearing loss are able to live independently for longer, compared with those who have untreated hearing loss.



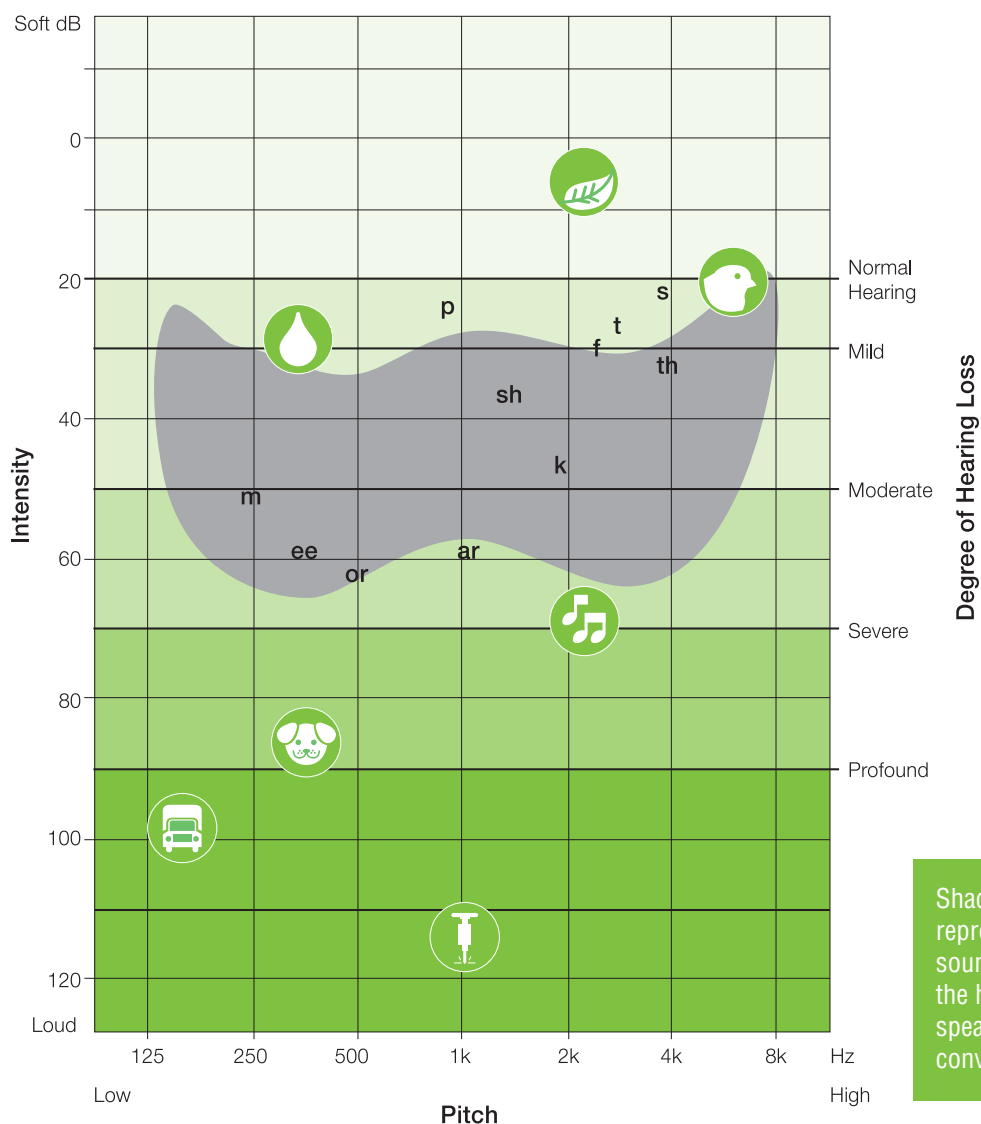
Advances in hearing
technology now make
it possible to give better
hearing to over 95% of
people with hearing loss.

Degrees of Hearing Loss

The normal hearing threshold is **20dB and below** at all sound frequencies.

If your hearing threshold is above this range, you are classified as having hearing loss.

Mild degree (20-40dB)	Soft speech and speech from a distance is difficult to hear
Moderate degree (41-55dB)	Typical conversational speech is hard to follow
Moderately Severe degree (56-70dB)	Only loud speech can be heard
Severe degree (71-90dB)	Even loud speech is hard to follow
Profound (91dB+)	Considered "deaf"



Shaded figure represents all of the sounds that make up the human voice when speaking at normal conversational levels.

Signs of Hearing Loss

Hearing loss is a gradual process and can often go unrecognised for many years. As with most impairments, the signs of hearing loss differ from person to person.

The questionnaire below is a useful guide for assessing whether you or someone you know may be experiencing hearing loss.

Hearing Loss Questionnaire

Loss of high pitch sounds: Often, the first sounds to disappear are the high frequency sounds. These make up the softer high frequency speech sounds, such as the consonant sounds “s”, “f” and “p”, as well as the phonemes “ch”, “th” and “sh”. The voices of women and children are often softer and higher-pitched, so are likely to be more difficult to hear.

1. Do you sometimes feel certain people sound less clear or seem to mumble when they speak? ☐ YES ☐ NO
 2. Do you find some women's and children's voices difficult to hear? ☐ YES ☐ NO
 3. Do you often have to ask people to repeat themselves? ☐ YES ☐ NO
-

Distance listening: Sounds become softer the further they travel – if the distance is doubled, the sound energy is reduced by half. People with hearing loss often have more difficulty hearing distant sounds because of their softer nature.

4. Do you find it difficult to hear at a meeting when you are seated at the back? ☐ YES ☐ NO
5. Do you have difficulty hearing at a church, concert hall or other places of public gatherings? ☐ YES ☐ NO
6. Do you have difficulty hearing people when they speak to you from another room of the house? ☐ YES ☐ NO
7. Do you require the TV to be louder than others in the room? ☐ YES ☐ NO

Signs of Hearing Loss

Hearing in noisy places: Our brain uses important frequency cues to help us tell the differences between sounds – this makes it easy for our brain to lock into sounds from one direction, while ignoring sounds from other directions. Unfortunately, as we lose our hearing some of these subtle frequency differences are not heard, making it difficult to focus on certain sounds while filtering out others.

8. Do you have difficulty following group conversations? ☐ YES ☐ NO

9. Do you sometimes find it difficult to hear at family gatherings? ☐ YES ☐ NO

10. Do you try to avoid certain cafes, restaurants and shops because they are too noisy? ☐ YES ☐ NO

Tinnitus (ringing ears): Tinnitus or ringing in the ears is often a symptom of hearing loss. As the sensory cells in the part of the ear called the cochlea die off, the brain stops receiving auditory signals – instead, it sometimes generates its own ‘phantom’ signals, which creates this ringing in the ears.

11. Do you experience ringing in the ears? ☐ YES ☐ NO

**If you answered YES to three or more questions,
you may be experiencing hearing loss.**

“ You can’t fake listening.
It shows. ”

Raquel Welch

Getting Your Hearing Assessed

Do you think that you or someone you know may be experiencing hearing loss?

A hearing test is the best way to find out.

And the good news is, you can take the first step without having to go into a clinic

– our **Online Hearing Test** only takes 7 minutes and can be performed at home.



ONLINE HEARING TEST - quick, easy and in the comfort of your own home!

Here's how the Online Hearing Test works:

- Visit: www.testmyhearingonline.com.au
- Find a quiet place in your home, making sure you shut windows and doors, and turn off the air con
- For best results, use headphones or earbuds while taking the test
- Press 'Submit results' to see your results and receive a report by our audiologist's



CLINICAL HEARING TEST - for comprehensive testing

If you're ready to have your hearing assessed and would like some professional advice, then we recommend a **comprehensive hearing assessment at one of our hearing clinics.**

- A full hearing assessment is easy and painless
- The test and consultation takes approximately 60 minutes
- The clinician will examine your ear canals and ear drums, test your middle ear pathways, and measure your hearing thresholds and ability to understand speech at different levels
- The clinician will explain the results to you and, if necessary, make recommendations for your hearing solution
- Results can be sent to your GP to include your hearing care as part of your overall health management

To request a hearing assessment appointment, contact your closest clinic (details on the back cover) **or visit** www.totalcarehearing.com.au/book-appointment

Hearing Aids: The Right Style for You

For many people, hearing aids are the best solution to improve their hearing.

But with so many different types of devices to choose from, what do you need to know and how can you help your clinician find the best solution for you?

To assist you, we've put together some information on hearing aids and their available features.

1 Selecting the Style:

Hearing aids come in a wide variety of styles, from small and completely invisible in-ear models to devices worn on the ear.

The most suitable style for you depends on:

- Your preference for discreetness
- Your degree of hearing loss
- The shape of your ear
- Whether you wear glasses
- Your hands' dexterity
- Your wax production

It is best to follow the advice of your clinician when choosing the right hearing aid style for you.



IIC – Invisible in Canal

- Invisible in-ear hearing aid
- Fits deeper within ear canal
- Suitable for mild to moderate loss
- Custom moulded



CIC – Completely in Canal

- Sits in the ear canal with limited visibility
- Suitable for mild to moderate loss
- Custom moulded



ITE/ITC – In the Ear

- Sits in the outer ear
- Host additional features due to larger size, i.e directional microphone
- Suitable for mild to severe loss
- Custom moulded



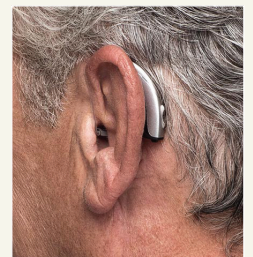
RIC – Receiver in the Ear

- Worn behind the ear, most common style
- Near invisible when worn
- Provides for most natural sound as receiver sits within ear canal
- Suitable for all hearing loss levels



BTE – Behind the Ear

- Worn behind the ear
- Larger device, suitable for those with limited dexterity
- Suitable for all hearing loss levels, particularly profound



Hearing Aids: The Right Features for You

2 Selecting the features:

Modern digital hearing aids have a suite of technological features. Deciding which of these features are best for you depends on your lifestyle.

Here are the main points to consider:



Battery

Rechargeable battery devices are highly recommended where possible as they are much easier to manage, safer and better for the environment.

Majority of charging cases also dry and clean your hearing aids as they charge and doubles as a carry case to keep your hearing aids safe.



Telecoil

If you regularly attend places such as church, the theatre or other public gatherings, you may benefit from having a **telecoil** in your hearing aid.

A telecoil picks up a Loop system that is part of the public announcement system. Using the telecoil can enhance the speaker's voice while reducing unwanted background noises.

A telecoil can also enhance telephone conversations.

You should discuss with your clinician whether you would benefit from a telecoil.

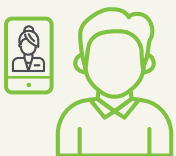


Binaural Processing

Binaural processing is a term used to describe how both the left and right hearing aids communicate with each other, in order to process sounds in a similar way to our ears.

Binaural processing can significantly improve listening comfort and speech understanding in noisy places.

Binaural processing comes in a range of performance levels to suit different lifestyles.



TeleHealth Hearing

TeleHealth Hearing is our contactless service enabling our audiologist to custom program and fine tune your TeleHealth enabled hearing aids remotely, whilst you are in the comfort of your home or office.

Hearing Aids: The Right Features for You



Wireless audio streaming

Almost all modern hearing aids have wireless technology to enable them to connect to telephones, televisions and other audio devices.

Phone Streaming

Latest iPhones and many Android* phones will stream phone calls, music and other sounds from you phone directly to your hearing aid. This enables you to enjoy calls and sounds hands free and puts you in control of the volume to suit your hearing level and enjoyment.

*Android phones not compatible for direct streaming requires an additional device to connect the phone to the hearing aids.

TV Streaming

TV streaming devices feeds audio from your television directly into your hearing aids in Dolby Digital quality.

TV streaming provides clarity sound and volume control to suit your hearing level and enjoyment without affecting others watching.

Most TV devices allow for simultaneous streaming to multiple sets of hearing aids (must be same brand) with just the one TV device.



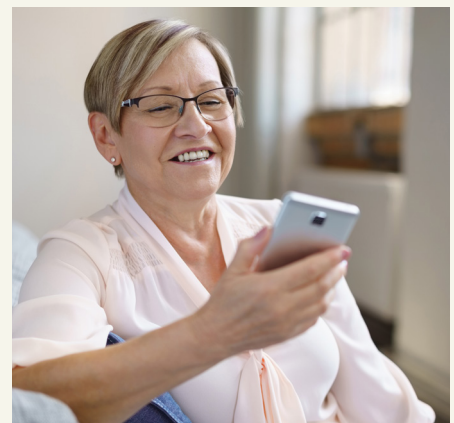
Apps

Smart Apps

Smart APPs available for majority of hearing aids puts complete control of your hearing aids at your fingertips. Available free for Apple and Android phones, the APP offers advanced remote control options so you can change settings and personalise your hearing aids according to your individual preference with a touch of the screen.

Some APPS uses artificial intelligence (AI) to learn your preferences to create the optimal solution tailored to your individual hearing needs and personal preference.

The AI continuously develops new skills working automatically in the background to better support you.



Hearing Aids: The Right Performance for You



Performance Level

Hearing aids come in a variety of **performance levels** to suit the needs of the user. Each performance level has a different combination of features, such as processing channels, noise reduction, directional microphones etc.

For example, a hearing aid for basic needs may only have four processing channels, while a hearing aid for advanced needs may have ten processing channels.

The following table outlines different performance levels and can be used as a guide for selecting the best level for your needs:

Features	Entry Level Designed for people with quiet lifestyle.	Essential Designed for people who socialise once a week and mainly operate in quiet environments.	Advanced Designed for active lifestyles with frequent communication.	Premium Designed for active and social lifestyle, where speech needs to be enhanced in dynamic environments.
One-on-One conversations	✓	✓	✓	✓
Watching TV	✓	✓	✓	✓
Theatres, lectures and movies	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mobile phone		✓	✓	✓
Small group conversations			✓	✓
Busy restaurants			✓	✓
Large gatherings Big crowds				✓
Parties				✓
Work				✓
In significantly challenging, noisy environments such as shopping centres and outdoors.				✓

“ It is not the voice that
commands a story: it is the ear ”

Italo Calvino

Cost of Hearing Aids

The cost of hearing aids depends on their performance level.

Each manufacturer offers a different number of performance levels within their range, typically consisting of three or four performance level options.

The below is a guide to approximate costs per hearing aid for each performance level:

Entry Level	Essential	Advanced	Premium
\$995 – \$1200	\$1500 – \$2400	\$2500 – \$4000	\$4200 +

View our Online Shop at www.totalcarehearing.com.au/shop for our range of hearing aids at great prices

Rebates Available

Health Funds

Most health funds offer rebates on hearing aids ranging from \$400 to \$1800.

The rebate amount depends on the health fund and policy type.

Pensioner and Veteran Services

The government funded Hearing Services Program provides full subsidy towards appointments and subsidy towards hearing aids for eligible pensioners and veterans. The subsidy is in the form of a voucher that can be used at any Government-accredited clinic which Totalcare Hearing is one of.

The voucher can either be used to receive FREE, fully subsidised hearing aids with basic performance, or be put towards more advanced TOP-UP hearing aids where you pay the difference.

For more information and to find out if you are eligible for a government voucher, contact your closest Totalcare Hearing clinic (details on the back cover). Have your pension card ready in hand and within a few minutes we can let you know if you are eligible.

Your Hearing Health

1. Your Hearing Results

Left Ear: _____

Right Ear: _____

Next Review Date: _____

2. Recommendations

Your Budget: _____ Required Performance level: _____

Starting Your Journey

Are you ready to take the next steps and move ahead in your hearing journey?

Whether you're simply after more information or ready to try hearing aids, Totalcare Hearing is here to help, every step of the way.

What to do next

- **Ready to have your hearing tested?**

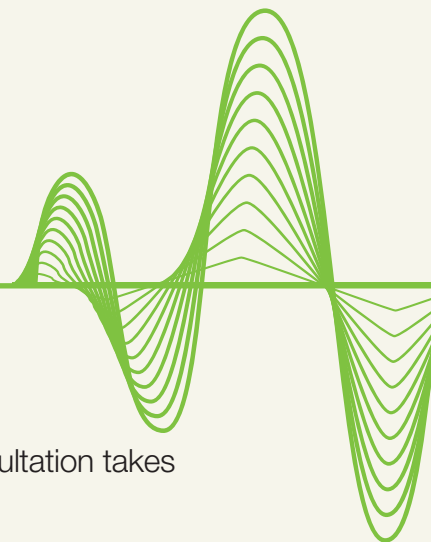
Request an appointment for a full hearing assessment. The testing and consultation takes approximately one hour. Bring a family member or friend along for support.

- Free hearing test and services for Pensioners under the government Hearing Services Program. Enquire with the clinic to see if you are eligible.

- **Interested in trialling hearing aids?**

Book an appointment to undertake a no obligation, 2-week take home trial of the latest hearing aid.

- Free to partially subsidised devices available under the Hearing Services Program.



Totalcare Hearing Clinics

BONDI JUNCTION

📍 Corner of Hollywood Ave and Pine Lane,
Bondi Junction, 2022

☎ 9387 6444
✉ bondi@totalcarehearing.com.au

CARINGBAH

📍 1/38 President Ave,
Caringbah, NSW 2229

☎ 9526 8631
✉ caringbah@totalcarehearing.com.au

HUNTERS HILL

📍 Shop 7b, 45 Gladesville Road,
Hunters Hill, NSW 2110

☎ 9816 3077
✉ huntershill@totalcarehearing.com.au

NEUTRAL BAY

📍 Shop 2, 3-5 Waters Road,
Neutral Bay, NSW 2089

☎ 9909 0020
✉ nb@totalcarehearing.com.au

WEST PENNANT HILLS

📍 Suite 3, 562-564 Pennant Hills Road,
West Pennant Hills, NSW 2125

☎ 8859 8880
✉ wph@totalcarehearing.com.au

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