

The Real Cost of Hearing Aids

Hearing Aids can change your life, but for many the cost seems prohibitive. The expense stops many people even taking a hearing test. Hearing Aids are not cheap, but remember you are paying for the extensive research and technology behind them. You are also paying for fittings and for those trial periods that can result in a non-sale.

You get what you pay for

If you have high hearing needs, that is, you wish to hear as well as possible in a wide range of challenging listening environments, you may seek the assistance of *Premium* instruments and accessories. But if your hearing needs are not as demanding, hearing aids in the *Value* range may provide you with very acceptable performance in most of your daily listening activities. For those who have a reasonably active lifestyle there is a middle range of *Advanced* aids.

Accessories are available for use with all levels of hearing aid technology which can allow your aids to link directly to mobile phones, landline phones and to your TV or computer.

These days all hearing aids are digital and at all price levels they can offer features that were only available in premium aids of only a few years ago.

Hearing aids are only aids. They do not restore your hearing. They amplify the sound around you and can apply a number of processes to try to present to you as much speech information as they can, while trying to reduce competing sounds.

If you see a MNZAS audiologist (<http://www.audiology.org.nz>) – their society's Code of Ethics ensures that you receive the best possible care. Shop around for prices and brands. Ask if the audiologist is commission-based. Ask about follow up care – how long is the trial period? Are there free consultations or batteries?

At the hospital in Nelson, clients do not have to pay fitting fees, making the full cost less than from a private audiologist. However, the hospital now has a very strict criteria for seeing adults and most people have to go to a private Audiologist.

To give you some idea of cost, **at the hospital** hearing aids in the:

- *Value* range may cost \$800 to \$1200 each.
- *Advanced* Hearing aids may cost \$1500 to \$2100 each and
- *Premium* range aids can cost from \$2600 to \$3100 each.
- Some manufacturers have a *Budget* range of aids which is priced below the *Value* range.

Deduct the \$511.11 subsidy per aid from these prices. While you are budgeting, remember – hearing aids do not last forever...the subsidy is available every six years.

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