

Can I get a hearing aid from the VA and other Frequently Asked Questions

1. Can I get a hearing aid from the VA?

It is National VA Policy that hearing aids are furnished to eligible veterans in accordance with the restrictions defined in a VA Directive 2002-039 released July 5, 2002. Briefly, the Directive explains that eligibility for hearing aids is currently limited to veterans with a documented service connected hearing loss, veterans receiving a disability rating of 10% or more - for a condition other than hearing loss, and some veterans with very special needs. With the exception of veterans with documented service connection for hearing loss, an eligible veteran must be currently enrolled in and receiving healthcare from a VA Medical Center or VA Outpatient Clinic.

Hearing aids are not customarily provided to non-service connected veterans. However, if there is a medical reason, a VA Physician can refer a non-service connected veteran for a hearing evaluation.

If you are not certain about your eligibility status, check the blue pages of your local phone directory for the number of your local Veterans Benefits counselor, or, call your nearest VA and ask for the Veterans Service Center. You may also contact the VA Health Benefits Service Center toll free at 1-877-222-VETS.

2. How much do hearing aids cost?

The VA does not sell hearing aids. If you purchase them privately, a hearing aid may cost \$1,000 or more for each aid.

3. How do I get a hearing aid from the VA?

By VA regulation, veterans who are service connected for hearing loss can contact a VA audiology clinic directly. At that time you will be scheduled to have a hearing test to see if you need a hearing aid. Veterans who are not service connected for a hearing loss are not eligible for hearing aids.

A primary care provider will refer other veterans eligible to receive hearing aids to an audiologist. The Audiology Clinic will then schedule you for a hearing test and ear impressions. A return appointment to the Audiology Clinic would be scheduled for the hearing aid fitting.

4. I am a retired military veteran. I received my hearing aids from the Army. How can I receive hearing aid services from the VA?

First you need to contact the VA closest to you and enroll to become a registered veteran. Second, you need to contact a Veteran's Benefits Counselor to arrange an examination to establish service connection for your hearing loss and any other disabilities you may have incurred while in the military. In the mean time, the audiology clinic will register your hearing aids with the Denver Distribution Center so that you can receive repairs and batteries. When your service connection is established, you will be eligible to receive hearing aids and services from the VA.

5. How do I know if I am service connected for hearing loss?

If you are registered as a VA patient, your service-connected conditions are listed on your encounter form.

6. How do I apply for service connection for hearing loss?

Make an appointment with a Veterans Counselor or Veteran's Benefits Counselor to tell him/her that you want to file a claim for service-connection. The counselor will arrange for you to be scheduled for a compensation and pension (C&P) examination. Following the examination you will receive written notification from Regional Office as to whether they awarded you service-connection.

7. How long should hearing aid batteries last?

Generally batteries last 2-3 weeks. For someone with a severe to profound hearing loss, every 10 days is not uncommon.

8. How do I get hearing aid batteries from the VA?

Batteries are provided only to veterans if they meet the criteria to receive hearing aids from the VA. Veterans are provided a "Battery Order Card" which is a post card from the Denver Distribution Center (DDC). Simply complete the post-card and mail it when you need batteries. DDC will send a 6-month supply directly to your home. If you do not have a card, write to:

VA Denver Distribution Center
P.O. Box 25166
Denver CO 80225-0166

In your correspondence indicate the hearing aid model, serial number, battery type, and battery number.

9. What are your clinic hours?

All audiology services have standard hours from 8:00a.m. to 4:30 p.m., however, some clinics have expanded hours. Check with the VA Audiology clinic closest to you for clinic hours of operation.

10. Why do my ears itch?

Ears itch for a variety of reasons. First of all, we have glands in our ears that produce earwax. Some people find earwax, when wet, causes their ears to feel itchy. The development of excessive hair in the ears can be a cause for some individuals, too. In others, dry skin, a common factor with advancing age, and can be the culprit. A sudden onset of itchiness may be a sign that an infection is present and you should seek advice from your medical provider.

11. How do I get my ears cleaned out?

Ears are usually maintenance free and clean themselves. Q-tips or other objects should never be used as they can push the earwax further into your ear canals or damage the eardrum. Sometimes excessive wax can build up and block the canal. If you have this problem, you should contact your medical provider. There are several methods available to remove excessive wax. Your provider may choose to use one of these or recommend that you acquire and over-the-counter kit for the removal of wax.