Hearing Care

Hearing loss usually happens gradually so you may not notice it at first. It is important to see your doctor regularly if you notice any changes in your hearing. Hearing tests and hearing aids are expensive and not covered by most insurance. Once you have hearing aids, consider adding them to your homeowner’s or renter’s insurance policy so that if they are lost or damaged in your home, you can get them replaced.

How do I get this?

**Medicare** - Medicare does not cover routine hearing tests or hearing aids. However, if your doctor or other healthcare provider orders a hearing test or balance exam because they suspect your hearing problems are related to a medical condition, then your care may be covered. These exceptions can be complicated – work with your doctor’s office to be sure you understand your coverage.

You may have hearing coverage through a supplemental insurance or an Advantage Plan – these are purchased in addition to original Medicare. Call the customer service number on the back of your health insurance card to find out if you have coverage.

To purchase supplemental insurance or an Advantage Plan, call your local State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) office at 1-888-696-7213. You may only be able to purchase this type of coverage at certain times of the year.

**Medicaid** - Medicaid does not cover hearing care for individuals over the age of 20 unless you have a cochlear implant that you received when you were younger and now need it replaced. If you have Medicaid, visit [www.colorado.gov/hcpf/find-doctor](http://www.colorado.gov/hcpf/find-doctor). Use the options on the left side to select “audiologist” and search by your location to get a list of providers in your area.

**Veterans** - Call your county Veteran Service Office (VSO) for more information:
[vets.dmva.state.co.us/?page_id=63](http://vets.dmva.state.co.us/?page_id=63) or call the Colorado Division of Veteran Affairs: 303-284-6077 (Denver location) or 303-914-5832 (Lakewood location).

**Community** - If you plan on applying for community financial assistance, do not start your hearing care (get a hearing test or order hearing aids) until you submit an application and receive an answer as to whether you’re approved.

- **Colorado Gerontological Society**: 1-855-293-6911; provides limited assistance for hearing tests and hearing aids; may be able to refer to other assistance

- **Area Agency on Aging / Aging & Disability Resource Center**: 1-844-265-2372 (statewide) May be able to refer to other assistance

- **Marion Downs Hearing Center / Center for Hearing, Speech and Language**: 303-322-1871
  Hearing tests, hearing aids and other hearing-related services for those with and without insurance. If you don’t have insurance, you may qualify for financial assistance. Call to see if you are eligible; will also take private pay.
**Hearing Rehab Center:** 303-502-9720
Hearing tests and hearing aids as well as other hearing-related services for those with and without insurance; multiple locations around the Denver metro area. Payment plans available.

**Things to consider:**
- Add hearing aids to your homeowner’s or renter’s insurance policy so that if they are lost or damaged in your home, you can get them replaced.
- Ask for a quote for hearing tests or hearing aids before you receive them so you are aware of how much they will cost. You can always ask a different clinic for a second opinion and compare costs.
- Keep hearing aids out of reach of dogs and cats – they love to chew on them!
- If you go to the hospital, make sure to tell the nurse you have hearing aids in and be sure they record and keep them somewhere safe while you are being treated.

**Need more assistance or want to talk with someone?**
- Colorado Gerontological Society: 1-855-293-6911
- Aging & Disability Resources for the Denver Metro Area: 303-480-6700
- Aging & Disability Resources for Colorado: 1-844-265-2372
- Community Helpline: 2-1-1
- Eldercare Locator (a national hotline for aging resources all over the U.S.): 1-800-677-1116

**Who provides hearing care and how they are licensed:**

**Otorhinolaryngologists** are doctors who specialize in medical problems and care of the ear, nose and throat. They are also known as **ENT doctors**. An ENT doctor is trained in general medicine and completes additional training to become board certified by the American Board of Otolaryngology. Some receive further credentialing to perform surgical procedures. Verify a doctor’s certification at [www.aboto.org](http://www.aboto.org).

**Audiologists** are specialists trained in hearing loss, testing, and treatment options. An audiologist can fit hearing aids and make other suggestions for other devices that may help your hearing. The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association offers certification and continuing education. Find an audiologist in your area at [www.asha.org/public](http://www.asha.org/public).

**Hearing Aid Specialists** provide basic hearing tests, counseling, and fits and tests hearing aids. They usually work in hearing aid provider stores. The National Board for Certification in Hearing Instrument Sciences provides continuing education and certification to them. Find a hearing aid specialist in your area at [www.asha.org/certification](http://www.asha.org/certification).

**Click on these links for more information:**
- [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov) or call 1-800-MEDICARE
- [www.hearingloss.org](http://www.hearingloss.org)