

Primary Care Management Guidelines

Hearing Aids

These guidelines are to assist GPs to monitor and manage their patients in a primary care setting until clinical thresholds indicate that tertiary care is required. The clinical thresholds are defined in the guidelines, and may require diagnostic support from a local optometrist or ophthalmologist. Providing a detailed diagnostic report will assist with the triage of your referral into the most appropriate clinic, within clinically appropriate timeframes.

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Some patients may be eligible for subsidised hearing aids from the Office of Hearing Services, including pensioners, holders of a Repatriation card or members of the Australian Defence Force.

Information on this scheme can be found at [Ear health | Australian Government Department of Health](#). All other patients will need to see a private hearing aid specialist and a list of all Audiology services in Victoria can be found at [Find an Audiologist \(audiology.asn.au\)](#).

Management

Hearing tests can be performed by community audiologists to determine suitability for hearing aids. A hearing test will be able to determine if the patient meets the clinical threshold in order to refer to the Eye and Ear. The Eye and Ear does not fit hearing aids, and there should therefore be direct referral for patients needing hearing aids to an appropriate hearing aid provider.

Hearing aid upgrades or adjustment by local hearing aid providers can be undertaken. If hearing aids have already been prescribed, the patient should return to their hearing aid provider to check the device and current settings. The Eye and Ear is unable to adjust hearing aids and therefore patients should return to their hearing aid provider. This should be performed annually and every time the hearing levels change.

When to refer to the Eye and Ear

- If there is a significant sensorineural asymmetry in the hearing levels recorded on the hearing test.
- If there is a conductive component to the hearing loss
- If otological clearance is required prior to the fitting of hearing aids.
- If the patient is still having hearing difficulties after hearing aids have been fitted and reviewed by the hearing aid provider. > Last updated 120713
- The patient has co-morbid otological conditions.
- If hearing aids are not a suitable management option, for example if the hearing loss is in the severe to profound range and the client receives

little benefit, or wearing hearing aids results in otitis externa (discharge from the ear canal). Diabetic retinopathy detected on dilated fundus examination or fundus photography (please provide photographs if available).

Information to include on the referral letter

- Detailed description of reasons that referral to tertiary services is warranted.
- Results of past audiological tests.
- When hearing aids were fitted and when they were last adjusted.

More information

Return to our [Primary Care Guidelines](#)

Go to our [Referral Guidelines](#)

[Factsheets](#) for GPs on what services optometrists can provide, optometrists scope of practice and [how to find a local optometrist](#).

Audiology services in Victoria can be found at [Home \(audiology.asn.au\)](http://Home.audiology.asn.au).