

# Hearing Aids

## Primary Care Management Guidelines for GPs

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 audiologist. Providing a detailed diagnostic report will assist with the triage of your referral into the most appropriate clinic, within clinically appropriate timeframes.

### Primary care management

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 [www.health.gov.au/hear](http://www.health.gov.au/hear).

All other patients will need to see a private hearing aid specialist and a list of all Audiology services in Tasmania can be found at <http://www.audiology.asn.au/index.cfm//consumers/audiology-services-directories/>

Management	Rationale / Detail
Hearing test performed by community audiologist 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 RHH.  RHH 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 upgrade or adjustment by local hearing aid provider. If hearing aids have already been prescribed the patient should return to their hearing aid provider to check the device and current settings.	RHH 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.
Patient required Bone Anchored Hearing Aids (BAHA).	There are no current public funds for BAHA. Patients have to see a private audiologist experienced with BAHA implants and a private ENT surgeon.

## **When to refer to the RHH**

If there is a significant sensorineural asymmetry in the hearing levels recorded on the hearing test i.e. prior hearing test essential.

- 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.
- 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).

## **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.

## **ENT Clinic contact details**

Address: Wellington Clinics, Level 11, 42 Argyle Street, Hobart, Tas. 7000

Phone: 6166 0050

Fax: 6234 9454

To contact ENT Registrar on-call phone RHH Switch on 6166 8308

Acknowledgement to the Royal Victorian Eye & Ear Hospital Primary Care Referral Guidelines

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