

Is an in-the-ear (ITE) hearing aid right for me?

Even though hearing aids share the common goal of providing more access to sounds, finding the right one can be a real challenge. Differences in amplification, size, style or the way a hearing aid is worn are some of the things that need to be taken into consideration.

One of the options available is an in-the-ear (ITE) hearing aid. This style of hearing aid sits inside the ear canal and is usually custom fit for the wearer.

There are three types of ITEs; the full shell, half shell and one that sits completely in the ear canal. The full shell ITE is designed to sit perfectly within the outer ear while the half shell fits within the outer part of your ear. The third type sits deep within the ear canal and is usually completely invisible.

Drawbacks of ITE hearing aids

Before getting into all the benefits of an ITE, let's weigh in on some of the drawbacks.

ITEs tend to be more pricey because they are custom made. Although there are powerful ITEs available on the market, most tend to be overshadowed by that of behind-the-ear (BTE) hearing aids. Finally - batteries. The smaller the battery, the shorter the lifespan- which means changing batteries more often.

Benefits of ITE Hearing Aids

Now for the good news! The ultimate advantage of an ITE hearing aid is discretion. Thanks to their small size, they are almost invisible. Additionally, they are easy to insert because most are custom made for a specific ear.

ITE hearing aids are created by taking an impression of the outer ear and ear canal at an audiologist's office. The molds are then sent to a hearing aid manufacturer for production.

Traditionally, ITE hearing aid shells are made of a hard plastic, but a new material has recently hit the market with *Phonak Virto B-titanium*. The new titanium shells allow the ITE hearing aid to be smaller, stronger and more durable than previous models.

Another benefit is that an ITE is usually less vulnerable to wind noise due to their placement within the ear, making sounds more enjoyable

Choosing a Hearing Aid

Your hearing care professional will lead you in *the right direction* when making a decision on what hearing aid is best for you. One thing is for sure... ITEs are *the way to go* if you want strength, power and discreteness in a hearing aid.