

Magazine spread



Are Over-the-Counter Hearing Aids Worth It?

By Kim Kragt, CCC-A, MA
Bronson Constance Brown Hearing Center

I am often asked, "what about those hearing aids that are being sold over-the-counter?"

It's important to note that these hearing aids are not the same as devices provided at audiology clinics and hearing centers. The FDA recently approved over-the-counter (OTC) hearing aids to increase access for those who want something basic; however, there is a big difference between OTC and prescription devices.

OTC hearing aids are a basic option for those with mild to moderate hearing loss who are 18 years of age or older. OTC hearing aids cost between \$1,000 and \$2,000 and can be found online or at a pharmacy. They are a standard fit and have limited settings. A user must be comfortable setting the hearing aid up on their own using a smartphone and making their own adjustments.

Although OTC hearing aids may offer improved hearing without the expertise of an audiologist, there are some drawbacks. There is no guarantee it will meet your needs. Also, without a proper hearing test, you would not know if your hearing loss was caused by an underlying health condition.

Prescription hearing aids are an option for all ages and are only offered through audiology and hearing aid clinics. A hearing specialist assesses your condition and makes sure you will get the best results from your hearing device. The process includes a hearing test and a fitting by a professional. There are also more style choices and options for a proper and more comfortable fit.

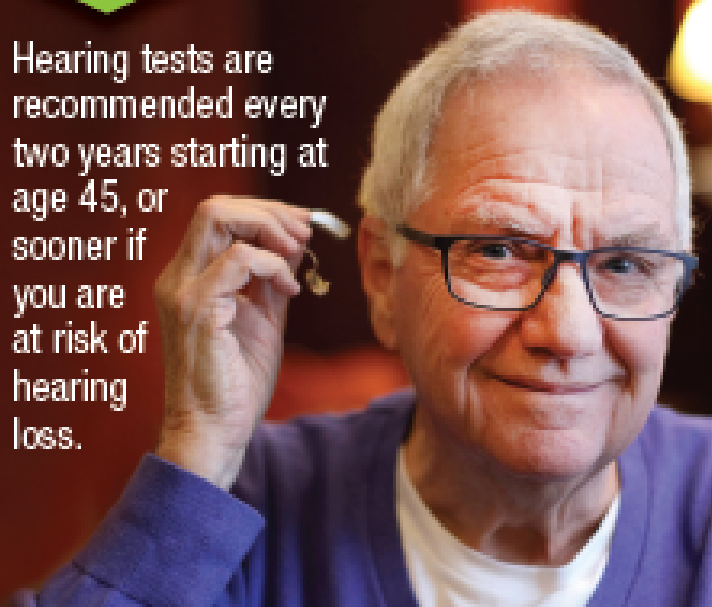
Prescription devices also have the option of being controlled through a smartphone app. If you select a hearing aid that uses an app, you may be able to

have it adjusted by your hearing specialist remotely.

The cost difference between OTC and prescription hearing aids varies based on several factors. Although prescription hearing aids may cost more upfront, they come with a consultation and some insurance providers cover a portion of the cost. It's also important to consider long-term expenses such as batteries and how often the device will need to be replaced. OTC hearing aids may need to be replaced more often which may end up being more costly in the long run.

How do I know which option is right for me? Even if you are considering an OTC hearing aid, we recommend you have a professional hearing exam. We are happy to help you diagnose your hearing loss and compare hearing aid options so you can make an informed decision.

Hearing tests are recommended every two years starting at age 45, or sooner if you are at risk of hearing loss.

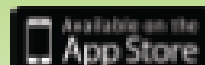


Your Medical Records In One Place – Bronson MyChart

Bronson-Constance Brown Hearing Center patients benefit from having hearing visits included in their Bronson MyChart account—a free and secure tool that gives you access to your medical record through your own computer, phone or tablet.

Sign up at bronsonhealth.com/mychart.

Stay connected with the Mobile App. Smartphone and tablet users can access Bronson MyChart through a free app. Search for "Bronson MyChart" on the App Store or Google Play.



Download the mobile app today!

A hearing test may also rule out if your hearing loss is related to a medical issue. As a member of Bronson Medical Group, our audiologists work closely with Bronson's ear, nose and throat specialists and can connect you to them for treatment, if needed.

Patients also benefit from having hearing visits at Bronson Constance Brown Hearing Center included in their Bronson MyChart account which keeps all of their electronic medical records in one place.

Contact Us Today

With our range of advanced hearing devices and personalized services, you can take control of your hearing health and get the most out of life.

Call (269) 343-2601 to learn more or visit bronsonhealth.com/hearing. No matter where you are in your journey to better hearing, we'll help find a solution for you.

Think You Might Need Hearing Aids?

After you have a hearing test, your audiologist will let you know if you need hearing aids and help you choose a style based on your needs and personal preference.

We offer a full selection of hearing aid batteries and other accessories. All non-rechargeable hearing aids purchased through us include up to 10 packs of additional batteries per hearing aid!

Over-the-Counter Hearing Aids vs. Prescription.

Hearing aids provided by audiologists are considered prescription devices and are not sold over the counter (OTC). We recommend having your hearing evaluated at Bronson Constance Brown Hearing Center before making the decision to purchase an OTC device.

SIDE-BY-SIDE COMPARISON

OTC	Prescription
Self-diagnosed hearing loss	Diagnosis based on a professional hearing test
Self-fit – one size fits most	Custom-fit for comfort by a licensed audiologist
No fine-tuning – limited settings	Set to your specific level of hearing loss
Designed for mild hearing loss	Corrects mild-to-severe hearing loss
Improper use can worsen hearing loss	Provider helps patients use the device correctly
Difficult to maintain on your own	Ongoing support and maintenance
Not FDA approved	FDA approved

Bronson Constance Brown Hearing Center in Battle Creek

Whether you're seeking care for yourself, your child or a loved one, our licensed and certified audiologists in Battle Creek will partner with you to improve your hearing. As trusted providers of audiology care since 1942, we'll put our experience to work.

Services offered:

- Hearing evaluations for adults, children and newborns
- Custom hearing aid fittings and adjustments
- Hearing aid cleaning and repair
- Custom ear molds and hearing protection
- Hearing loss prevention education
- Hearing aid trials/demos

Our team of audiologists works closely with the specialists at Bronson Otolaryngology, Head & Neck Surgery Specialists. If needed, your audiologist may refer you to one of our Bronson Battle Creek ear nose and throat (ENT) specialist to provide you with additional care.

Our ear, nose and throat specialists provide expert care for hearing loss, tinnitus and balance disorders and ear diseases in addition to care, treatment and surgical solutions for medical issues and diseases of the sinuses, nose, ears, tonsils, throat and neck.

Bronson Otolaryngology, Head & Neck Surgery Specialists is located at both Bronson Battle Creek and Bronson Methodist hospitals.

Our Team of Audiologists

Your first step toward better hearing starts with Bronson Constance Brown Hearing Center. Our team of hearing specialists is dedicated to helping adults and children with hearing loss achieve better hearing through personalized care and advanced technologies.



Amy Boyca, AuD



Rachel Clayton, CCC-A, MA



Samantha King, AuD, CCC-A



Kim Kragt, CCC-A, MA

The audiologists at Bronson Constance Brown Hearing Center are licensed through the State of Michigan and certified by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association.

We look forward to delivering excellent care, personalized services and lasting solutions to the Calhoun County community!

Learn more about our providers and services at bronsonhealth.com/hearing.

Four Convenient Locations in Battle Creek, Kalamazoo, and Portage.

- 300 North Ave., Suite 1400, Battle Creek*
- 801 John St., Suite M-273, Kalamazoo*
- 1634 Gull Rd., Suite 201, Kalamazoo
- 4855 West Centre Ave., Portage

*Audiology testing only

Pullup banner and flyer

Hearing Can Change Your World



Hearing Healthcare & Advanced Technology for ALL.

Trusted by Physicians and Patients Since 1942

 **BRONSON**
Constance Brown
Hearing Center

BRONSON CONSTANCE BROWN HEARING CENTER



As one of the area's most trusted providers of audiology services since 1942, our team of professionals is committed to your hearing care. Your audiologist will use a variety of hearing tests to determine your hearing needs.

Our offices are connected with an electronic medical record, so your care is easily coordinated among all of your Bronson doctors. And you can partner in your care through Bronson MyChart — an online health record that gives you free and secure access to information about your health.

Referrals are not needed unless required by your health insurance provider. Schedule an appointment today, so we can partner with you to achieve better hearing.



Rachel Clayton, Au.D., CCC-A, MA



Samantha King, Au.D., CCC-A



Amanda Knapp, Au.D., CCC-A



Kim Kragt, Au.D., CCC-A, MA

The audiologists at Bronson Constance Brown Hearing Center are licensed through the State of Michigan and certified by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association.

Audiology Services

- Comprehensive diagnostic hearing evaluations for adults, children and newborns
- Custom hearing aid fittings and adjustments
- Hearing aid cleaning and repair (call ahead for availability)
- Custom ear molds
- Hearing loss prevention education
- Hearing aid trials/demos
- Custom hearing protection

Bronson Constance Brown Hearing Center

1634 Gull Rd.

Suite 201

Kalamazoo, MI 49048

(269) 343-2601

(269) 343-9257 fax

4855 West Centre Ave.

Portage, MI 49024

(269) 372-2709

(269) 372-3021 fax

Audiology testing only:

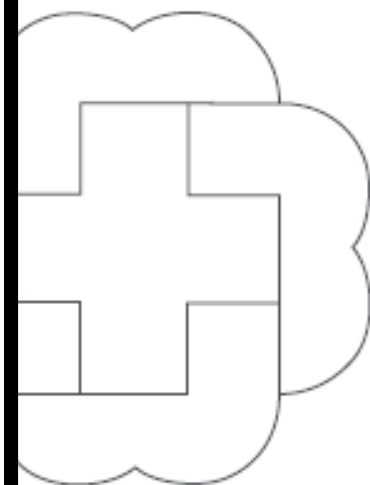
300 North Ave., Suite 1400

Battle Creek, MI 49017

601 John St., Suite M-273

Kalamazoo, MI 49007

Provider referral letter



Dear Provider,

Thank you for referring your patient to Constance Brown Hearing Centers. As you may have heard, we joined Bronson Healthcare on January 1, 2023. Our new name is Bronson Constance Brown Hearing Center (BCBHC). Current staff will continue in their roles so patients will not have a disruption in their care.

BCBHC is a member of Bronson Medical Group — this means it is easier for our team to collaborate and schedule follow-up care with Bronson's ear, nose and throat (ENT) specialists. Patients will also benefit from having hearing visits included in their Bronson MyChart account which keeps all of their electronic medical records in one place.

New Referral Process

You don't need to do anything additional for the referral you just submitted. Moving forward, we have a new referral process. Please send your referrals with the attached form or place your referral through Epic.

We Will Continue to Offer:

- Diagnostic hearing tests for newborns, children and adults
- Hearing aids and assistive devices
- Follow-up care
- Counseling
- Preventative programs and education

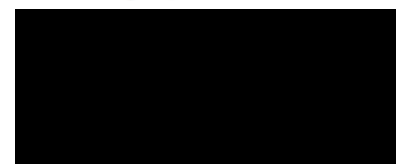
What You Need to Know:

- Our phone numbers and fax numbers have remained the same
- We will continue to operate in our current locations
- Two new locations have been added at Bronson Methodist Hospital and Bronson Battle Creek Hospital for audiology testing only with expansion to additional services in the future
- Financial assistance will continue to be available for those eligible

We appreciate your continued trust and look forward to working with you in 2023.

Learn more about our providers and services in Kalamazoo, Portage and Battle Creek at bronsonhealth.com/audiology. If you have questions, call us at (269) 343-2601.

Thank you,



Director Practice Operations
Bronson Medical Group

300 North Ave., Suite 1400
Battle Creek, MI 4901
269.245.8590

A Bronson Battle Creek
Hospital facility

601 John St., Suite M-273
Kalamazoo, MI 49007
269.381.0180

A Bronson Methodist
Hospital facility

1634 Gull Rd # 201
Kalamazoo MI 49048
269.343.2601
269.343.9257 fax

A Bronson Methodist
Hospital facility

4855 W Centre Ave.
Portage, MI 49024
269.372.2709
269.372.3021 fax

A Bronson Methodist
Hospital facility

bronsonhealth.com

Print Ads



Constance Brown Hearing Centers has Joined Bronson Healthcare

Whether you're seeking care for yourself, your child or a loved one, our licensed and certified audiologists will partner with you to improve your hearing. As trusted providers of audiology care since 1942, we'll put our experience to work for you!

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- Hearing aid trials/demos
- Custom hearing protection

Call (269) 343-2601 to schedule a hearing test in Battle Creek, Kalamazoo or Portage.

bronsonhealth.com/hearing

 **BRONSON**
Constance Brown
Hearing Center



Experiencing Hearing Loss? We Can Help.

Whether you're seeking care for yourself, your child or a loved one, our licensed and certified audiologists will partner with you to improve your hearing. As trusted providers of audiology care since 1942, we'll put our experience to work for you!

Call (269) 343-2601 to schedule a hearing test in Battle Creek, Kalamazoo or Portage. Learn more at bronsonhealth.com/hearing.

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