



Attorney General

Josh Stein**Robocall Hotline:(844)-8-NO-ROBO**
All Other Complaints:(877)-5-NO-SCAM
Outside NC:919-716-6000

Be Skeptical of Companies Selling Over-the-Counter Hearing Aids

CONSUMER ALERT



Be skeptical of companies selling over-the-counter hearing aids



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Consumers in North Carolina should be on the lookout for unscrupulous companies pushing potentially faulty over-the-counter hearing aids. Since the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) relaxed restrictions on the sales of hearing aids in 2017, dozens of companies have entered the over-the-counter hearing aid market. While Congress directed the FDA to pass regulations creating standards for safety, consumer labeling, and manufacturing protections, those regulations have yet to materialize. As a result, consumers face a barrage of potentially misleading advertisements about over-the-counter hearing devices.

Consumers should be skeptical of websites that tout “deals” for much less than what the consumer would pay for a traditional FDA-approved hearing aid. Misrepresentations about FDA approval and the promise of money back guarantees have left consumers unable to receive refunds for over-the-counter hearing aids that simply do not work.

Our office is working hard to protect consumers, and Attorney General Stein advises consumers to keep these five tips in mind before buying over-the-counter hearing aids:

1. The FDA has not approved any over-the-counter hearing aids. While some of these products work as advertised, over-the-counter hearing aids are not currently regulated and may simply be sound amplifiers, which may be of poor quality and not work for those with significant hearing loss. The FDA also does not evaluate or approve over-the-counter hearing aids and does not issue any such registration certificate, so any claim that a device has been issued an “FDA Registration Certificate” is misleading.
2. Be skeptical of testimonials for good reviews on a company’s website. Check out the Better Business Bureau (<https://www.bbb.org/>) and other objective consumer review sites before purchasing. If a company has an “F” rating, something is wrong, and buyers should beware.

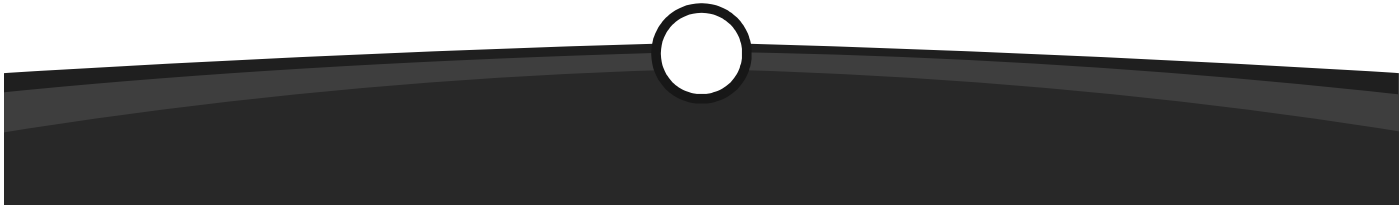
3. Price-shop diligently. The exact same product may be available at varying prices.
4. Scrutinize the refund-return policy carefully before you buy. Take note of the time-frames and conditions for refunds.
5. Do your homework if you are weighing whether to purchase an over-the-counter hearing device versus a traditional FDA-approved hearing aid. Consider getting a hearing screen and opinion from a hearing specialist.

If you believe you may have been the victim of a scam, call our office at 877-5-NO-SCAM or file a complaint online at <https://ncdoj.gov/file-a-complaint/>.

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