



 **Medical Alert**
COMPARISON

MEDICAL ALERT SYSTEM BUYERS GUIDE



Medical Alert Comparison is a free service that compares medical alert systems and companies to help make your life easier when researching a medical alert device for yourself or a loved one.

Essentially, we've combed through all the major medical alarm company providers and done the research so that you don't have to. Here at Medical Alert Comparison, we believe that the health and safety of our loved ones is of the utmost importance. This Buyer's Guide is a compilation of everything we've learned over the years and provides helpful tips and advice that we've given our own family members.

While all medical alert devices were created with the intention of keeping you and your family safe in an emergency, not all medical alert devices were created equal. There are many factors to take into account when deciding on the right medical alert device for you and your family, including price, monitoring and range of service.

We know that there are many stressors that come along with aging or failing health and we firmly believe that making the decision to purchase a medical alert system shouldn't be one of them!

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Section One:
The “Who, What , and Why” of Purchasing Medical Alert Systems

What Is A Medical Alert System?

A medical alert system is a set of devices that allows someone to connect with a live operator should they experience a medical emergency. Here in America, the medical alert system dates back to 1975, when American International Telephone Company offered customers an emergency home system. The original system consisted of a large medallion worn around the neck and that, when pressed, would send a pre-programmed message to several different phone numbers.

Medical alert devices have come a long way since 1975, however. While the premise is still the same, the technology behind these medical alert devices is much more sophisticated now. The majority of medical alert devices still require you to press an emergency button, but some companies offer devices with advanced fall detection technology, which recognizes when a fall has occurred and automatically triggers a call for help.

Whether you need an in-home system or a mobile system, medical alert devices include some sort of base station with a medical alert necklace or bracelet. Should you experience some sort of emergency, you simply press the emergency button on that medical alert necklace or bracelet and a signal is wirelessly transmitted to the base station, which calls in to the monitoring center and connects you with a live operator. Depending on company protocol, the emergency operator can call 9-1-1 for you, contact your family, or contact neighbors or friends.

Who Needs A Medical Alert System?

There are many reasons why someone would need a medical alert system. And contrary to popular belief, medical alerts aren't just senior alert systems. People of all different ages and backgrounds might find them useful, especially if they suffer from certain medical conditions.

Age-Related Falls

It's true that your balance decreases as you age, and you become at greater risk for experiencing potentially fatal falls. Medical alert systems for seniors are a great way to ensure that you or your loved ones remain safe as they age. Senior alert systems can help provide peace of mind should an accident occur.

Cardiovascular Disease

If you have experienced a stroke or heart attack, you are most likely at risk for experiencing another. A medical alert device will ensure that you or your loved ones will be able to receive immediate medical attention, which can often mean the difference between life and death when it comes to cardiovascular emergencies.

Multiple Sclerosis

Multiple Sclerosis (MS) is an autoimmune disease that is directed against the body's central nervous system. In addition to other symptoms, people living with MS can experience issues related to their gait, including weakness, loss of balance

and sensory fatigue—all of which can lead to more frequent falls. MS is often diagnosed in young adults, proving that medical alert systems are not just for seniors.

Diabetes

Many older adults suffer from Type 2 diabetes, which often appears in older people as they age. Serious side effects of mismanaged diabetes include extreme fatigue, numbness or tingling in hands and feet, or even high blood pressure (which can lead to a heart attack or stroke). These side effects can be dangerous and a medical alert can end up saving your life.

Epilepsy

For those who suffer from epileptic seizures, the physical injuries that may occur during an episode can be quite devastating—bleeding limbs and broken bones included. Medical alert devices can't prevent you from getting injured, but they can ensure that you receive speedy medical intervention after an episode has occurred.

Peace of Mind

You don't have to have an ailment or medical condition to need a medical alert system. Medical alert systems for seniors provide peace of mind to those who live alone, as many of them not only work for medical emergencies but also for home intrusions, fires and even carbon monoxide leaks.

Why Should I Buy A Medical Alert System?

With the popularity of cell phones, you may be wondering, “Why should I buy a medical alert system?” The answer is: to ensure your own safety.

Cell phones have proven to be a wonderful invention. They not only allow you to connect with anyone, anytime, anywhere, but they also allow you to access any piece of information on the internet at any time you’d like. Cell phones, however, are far from perfect. In a true emergency, they lack the components of personal emergency response systems that guarantee your safety.

Here are the ways in which cell phones are unreliable when it comes to emergencies:

Interrupted Service

The old Verizon commercial with the tag line, “Can you hear me now?,” is the perfect way to summarize the service issue with cell phones. Service is not guaranteed, and can be spotty in some homes, even if they are in a coverage area. Personal emergency response systems, however, can connect you to help with a landline telephone connection, which is guaranteed to provide you with help when you need it most.

Not Waterproof

The major downfall of cell phones is that they are not waterproof—as anyone who has ever accidentally dropped a phone in a pool can attest! The majority of falls take place in the bathroom, after a bath or shower. A med alert has the ability to come with you in the shower

No Guarantee

Cell phones are great if you get stuck on the road with a flat tire or if you want to call your Grandson while you take the dog out for a walk, but there is no guarantee that they will come through for you in a real emergency. For instance, if you leave your phone on your nightstand and slip and fall while in the bathroom, you will have no means of alerting help. With a med alert, however, help is always around your neck or on your wrist and just the push of a button away.



Section Two:
Things To Consider Before Purchasing Medical Alert Devices

The Different Types of Personal Emergency Response Systems

Like most of the technology products on the market today, there is a wide variety of personal emergency response systems to choose from. Having advanced from a singular system that only worked through a landline phone connection, consumers today have many options for senior alert systems.

For the Home: Landline Connection

If you're in the market for home medical alert systems, consider going old school with a landline connection. These personal emergency response systems consist of a base station that plugs into both a phone jack and an electrical outlet and a corresponding medical alert necklace or bracelet. When you need to call for help, you simply push the emergency button and it automatically dials into a monitoring center through the base station. You will then be connected to a live operator who will talk to you over a two-way speaker box and determine what type of action to take next.

For the Home: Cellular Connection

If you no longer have a landline telephone connection but are still looking for home medical alert systems, a home device with a cellular connection could work best for you. Similar to home medical alert systems with a landline connection, home medical alert systems with a cellular connection consist of a base station that plugs into an electrical outlet, but it does not need a phone jack to connect to a monitoring center. Working off of the same satellite networks that cell phones

use, when you press the emergency button to call for help, the base station wirelessly connects you to a live operator. The one caveat to consider with cellular home medical alert systems is that you'll have to check with the medical alert device company to make sure you have full coverage in your neighborhood.

On the Go: Mobile Connection

If you're interested in having coverage both inside and outside of the house, you might find medical alert systems with GPS helpful. Not just used as senior alert systems, mobile medical alert systems are typically small enough to fit in a pocket or a purse and can go with you anywhere. The portable base station has an emergency button that can be used to call help, or it can be paired with a medical alert necklace or bracelet, which can also be used to call for help. Whether you're in the car, on a hike, out walking the dog, or running errands around town, medical alert systems with GPS will not only be able to connect you to help should an emergency occur, but they can also pinpoint your location using GPS technology.

High-Tech: Automatic Fall Detection

Perhaps the biggest advancement in fall alert systems is a medical alert with automatic fall detection. As far as senior alert systems go, automatic fall detection is the ultimate fail-safe when it comes to your health and wellness. By utilizing the technology behind accelerometers and barometric pressure sensors, fall alert systems with automatic fall detection are able to detect when a fall has occurred and automatically trigger the call for help, without you having to press an emergency button. The automatic fall detection sensors are worn around your neck as a medical alert necklace and also give you the option of self-triggering a call for help if you should need it.

Navigating Medical Alert System Reviews

With so many different personal emergency response system companies out there available to consumers, how can you possibly make a decision about which one is the best? Medical alert reviews are a great way to compare medical alert systems and many sites out there that can help you find the best medical alert systems on the market. But how can you tell which ones are trustworthy?

We might be biased, but here at Medical Alert Comparison we believe the following components make for trustworthy medical alert reviews when looking for the best medical alert systems:

Lots of Options

When you find a new website to compare medical alert systems ask yourself, “Do they have more than one or two medical alert companies to view?” If the answer is no, then most likely the review site is not legitimate. If the answer is yes, however, you may have found yourself a great place to read medical alert reviews.

Easy Reading

If a website that allows you to compare medical alert systems is difficult to read, hard to navigate and a bit convoluted to understand, you are most likely looking at a spam site. Spam sites are created in order to manipulate vulnerable consumers and we recommend staying far away from them!

Helpful Content

A great website with medical alert reviews will have additional content that is helpful to the consumer. Whether that content includes a guide book about the best medical alert systems, Frequently Asked Questions, videos or a detailed About Us page, extra content is a great indicator of how legitimate websites—and their reviews—really are.

Questions To Ask Medical Alert Companies Before You Buy

Not all medical alert companies were created equal; in fact, many of them can compete with lower advertised prices because of hidden fees they get you with once you sign a contract. While you might be attracted to an offer because of the low price, we strongly recommend asking about the following policies before making a purchase:

Hidden Costs and Fees

There are several different ways that medical alert companies build hidden fees into their deals. Look out for equipment fees, start up costs or activation fees—all of them can significantly add on to the advertised price of a medical alert system. Be sure to ask about the exact amount of money that you will be charged for your medical alert system before giving over your credit card information.

Contracts

Be wary of any of the medical alert companies that require you to sign a contract upon purchase. Contracts are legally binding and if they built in early termination fees or limited refunds to clauses in their contract, you could be signing away your money. Of course, you could always have a lawyer review the contract before making a purchase, however, which usually will run you a few hundred dollars.

Cancellation Policies and Refunds

Before making the commitment to buy a medical alert system, double check what the cancellation or refund policies might be. Some medical alert companies lock you in for a set amount of time before allowing you to cancel without paying a hefty fee, while others do not honor complete refunds. Asking about these policies up front will save you money and frustration in the long run.

Warranty

Not all medical alert companies offer a warranty on the user life of their products. In addition to simply asking if the product is under warranty, be sure to also inquire about what that warranty entails, so that there are no surprises should your equipment fail while under your care. After all, faulty equipment will not guarantee your safety in an emergency.



Section Three:
Finding the Best Medical Alert System for You

Since the individual needs of customers all vary, it only makes sense for medical alert companies to offer a wide range of products and features to their clients. So, how can you choose the best medical alert system for your needs?

The answer is simple: investigate deeper into the features for each product. Aside from the price, these are the real factors that should help you determine which is the best medical alert system for you.

Range of Service

The range of service refers to the working amount of distance between the medical alert necklace or bracelet and the base station in order for an emergency call to be triggered. Medical alert companies carry medical alert systems that vary in range of service, anywhere between 300 and 1300 feet. That's a big difference to consider—especially if you live in a large house.

Battery Life

While many of the medical alert devices on the market today plug into an electrical outlet to connect to power, the battery life is crucial should you experience a power outage. Certain neighborhoods are more prone to black outs and power outages than others, and you don't want your medical alert to lose functionality if you lose power.

Installation

How easy is the installation process? Ask the medical alert companies that you are

considering if they have staff on hand to walk you through the process if you need help, or if you would be on your own for the installation of your medical alert system.

Monitoring Services

Monitoring services are perhaps the most important component to purchasing personal emergency response systems. After all, it is the emergency operators at the monitoring centers that you are connected with when you press your emergency button. Be sure to inquire as to whether or not the monitoring center that your medical alert company of choice uses is UL Certified, employs 911/EMT trained operators and if they have the ability to dispatch police, fire, and paramedics depending on the emergency.

Customer Service

The last piece of the puzzle for many medical alert companies is their customer service department. Before ultimately making a purchasing decision for your medical alert device, find out whether or not the company of your choice has an in-house customer service team, or if they outsource it. If they outsource it, then you must keep in mind that the pleasant experience you had while buying your system might not be the same once you are an existing customer.



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Section Four:
Let's Get Started

Now that you know more about medical alert systems and what to look for in medical alert companies, are you ready to start the review process?

Visit <http://www.medicalalertcomparison.com/> today to read our reviews, watch videos about specific products or receive a FREE quote from our featured medical alert service.

If you'd prefer to speak with a senior care specialist directly, **call 800-317-5100** to find out more about what makes their medical alert systems the best on the market.

