

Your Hearing Aids

A guide for helping children and their families understand and take care of their hearing aids

Congratulations on your new hearing aids!!

This booklet will show you how to use your behind-the-ear (BTE) hearing aids and tell you about some of the things you have to be careful with when taking care of your hearing aids.

We hope you will love your new hearing aids!

This book belongs to:



Contents

How to turn your hearing aids on and off	5
How to put your hearing aid on your ear	6
Volume control	10
Batteries	11
Changing batteries	13
Old batteries	14
Taking care of your hearing aids	15
Hearing aids and batteries at night	18
Earmolds	19
The plastic tube	22
Accessories for your hearing aid	24
Telephones	26
Computers and hearing aids	26
Hearing aids and pets	30
Important things to remember	31
Helpful Tips	35
Notes	38

Having hearing aids is an exciting experience. It is important that you know how to use and take care of your hearing aids. On the following pages we will show you how to use them so that you can get the most out of your hearing aids. We will also give you information on how to look after your hearing aids. You need to remember that there are two parts to look after, the hearing aid itself and the earmold, which is the plastic part that fits in your ear.

How to turn your hearing aids on and off.

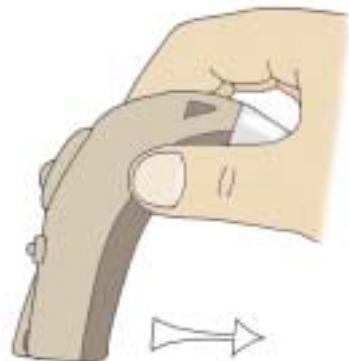
How you turn your hearing aids on and off depends on which model hearing aid you have. Your audiologist will mark which of the instructions you should follow.

Turn on your hearing aids by pushing the large switch to the letter M. You turn them off by pushing the same switch down to the letter O.



Or

Turn on your hearing aids by closing the battery drawer. Turn them off again by opening the battery drawer. Doing this disconnects the battery and saves it from running out of power when you are not wearing your hearing aids.



How to put your hearing aid on your ear.

Putting your hearing aids on may not always be easy at first and you might need help from your parents or teacher.

1. Remember to always turn off your hearing aid before putting it on.



2. Make sure that you have the right hearing aid for your right ear (it may have a red sticker) and the left hearing aid for your left ear (it may have a blue sticker).





3. Put the earmold in your ear.

4. If you have trouble putting the earmold in your ear ask your parents or teacher.





5. When the earmold is in place, put the hearing aid behind your ear.

6. Turn the hearing aid on.



7. Now you are ready to listen and hear better.

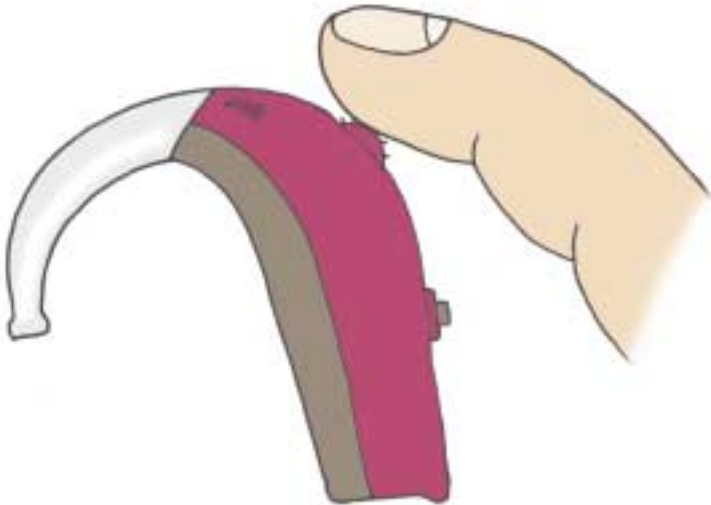


Remember to always turn your hearing aids off before taking them off. If you forget, you may hear a whistling sound.

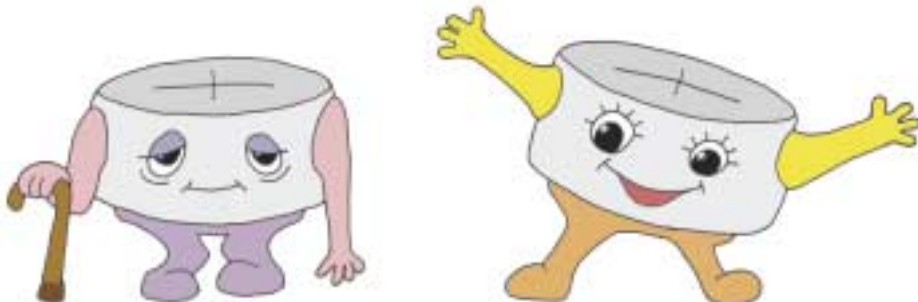


Volume control

Your hearing aids might have a volume control. You can change the loudness of the hearing aid by turning the volume control wheel. Pushing it up makes sounds louder and pushing the wheel down makes sounds softer. If you move your volume control, make sure you move it back to the correct position. Your audiologist might turn off or 'disable' the volume control so that the volume does not change when you touch the wheel. If it is disabled you may turn the volume wheel up or down but it won't make the sounds louder or softer.



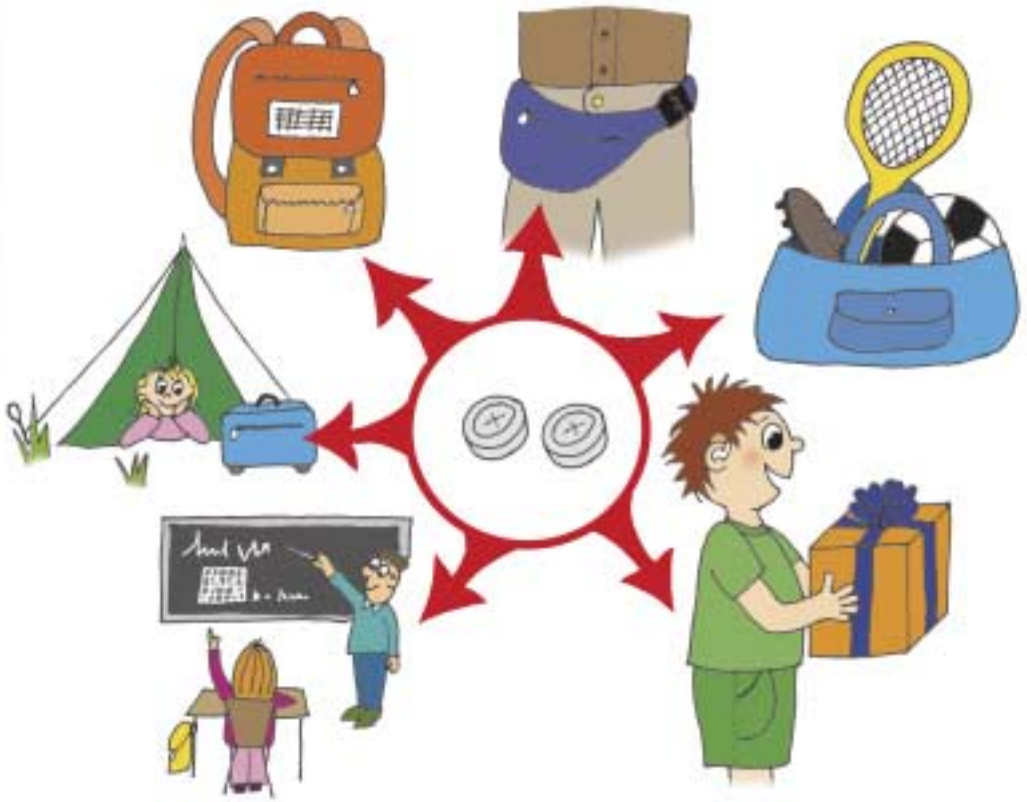
Batteries



The batteries are what keep your hearing aids working. It is therefore important that you take good care of the batteries and remember to have them changed when it is necessary.

Most often, hearing aid batteries will last from 5-15 days, but it depends on your hearing aids. It is very important to ask your audiologist how long the batteries in your hearing aids should last before they need to be changed. When you have worn your hearing aids for a few months, you will find out almost exactly how long your batteries last!

When your batteries start to wear out your hearing aids might beep or make a 'motoring' sound to let you know. That means it is time to change the batteries. If you do not change them the hearing aids will shut off and stop working. Remember to tell an adult when it is time to have the batteries changed - they can help you change them.



Make sure to always bring extra batteries to school or on trips in case the ones you use run out. It is also a good idea to make sure that your teacher at school has extra batteries for you. You, your parents and your teachers should also know the size of your batteries, so you can always get exactly the right size battery for your hearing aids if you are away from school or home.

You can write your battery size here: _____

Changing batteries

To change the battery of your hearing aid, open the battery compartment and remove the battery. Replace it with a new battery from the package - remember to remove the sticker first. If you cannot close the battery drawer after inserting the battery try turning the battery over - it may be upside down. If you do not know how to open the battery compartment, have your parents or teacher help you.



Old batteries

Don't keep worn out batteries lying around since you might get them mixed up with new ones. The dead batteries that you remove from your hearing aids should be thrown away. Give them to your parents, teacher or audiologist - they will know how to get rid of the batteries properly. Don't play with old batteries, your younger siblings and pets might be curious and put them in their mouth - this can be very dangerous!



Taking care of your hearing aids

One very important thing to remember is to never ever put your hearing aids in water since they have electrical parts.



You can wear them to the beach but you should never wear them when swimming.



You should also not wear them when showering or bathing.



It is okay to wear them when it's raining a little bit - but not when it's pouring down - unless you have an umbrella or a rain coat hood covering them.

Since you cannot use water to clean your hearing aids, simply wipe them clean with a soft cloth. You can also use a small soft brush or a dry, soft toothbrush. Because you use your hearing aids a lot, some of the buttons and switches may also get dirty. You should clean them with a cloth or brush as well. If the buttons and switches on your hearing aids are not kept clean, dirt and dust may get stuck in them and break them. You can get a special hearing aid brush from your audiologist.



If hearing aids are dropped on the floor they can break or be damaged. It is a good idea to clean them over a soft surface - like a cloth on a table.

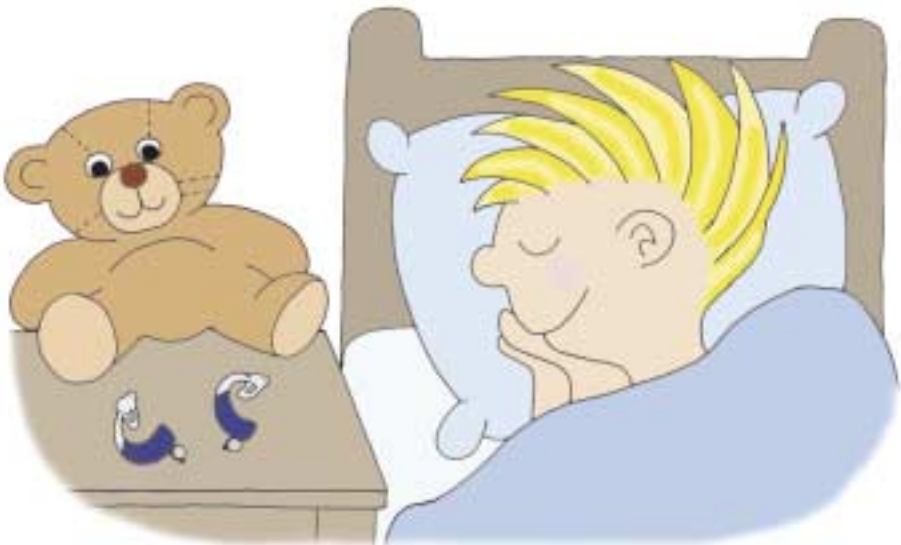


If the hearing aids have been exposed to heat, humidity or sweat it could be a good idea to place them in a special 'drying kit' over night. Such a kit takes the moisture out of the hearing aids. You and your parents can ask the audiologist to tell you more about such a kit and how to use it.



Hearing aids and batteries at night

Your hearing aids and its batteries need to rest when you do. You must always take your hearing aids off at night when you go to sleep. To make sure that the hearing aids and batteries are ready for the next day open the battery compartment completely over night; you don't need to remove the batteries. If the hearing aids have been exposed to a lot of moisture like sweat, you can place them in the special 'drying kit' over night. Remember that if you do not wear your hearing aids for two days or longer then you should take the batteries out.



Earmolds

As you know, your earmold has been made for you - this was done by the audiologist in the clinic or hospital. The earmold and tubing help the sound from the hearing aid reach your ear. Without the earmold the hearing aid cannot send the sound into your ear.



The earmolds will have to be replaced from time to time. This is because when you grow so do your ears - but since the earmolds don't grow with you, they won't fit you anymore and you will need new ones.



It is very important that the earmold fits just right. If it hurts to wear the earmold tell your parents or teacher.



It is very important to keep your earmolds clean. They are made of a different material than the hearing aids and contain no electrical parts - so it is okay for them to get wet. It is a good idea to wash them in warm soapy water once a week or more often if they get dirty faster.

Once you have washed the earmolds it is very important to dry them. They must be completely dry before you attach them to your hearing aids again.

You can dry the outside of the earmolds with a cloth. The inside must be dried by blowing the water out of the tubing. Do not use your mouth to blow the earmolds dry because the air from your mouth is moist and will not dry the earmolds. Instead, use an earmold blower, which sends dry air into the tubing of the earmold and gets the moisture out. You can get an earmold blower from your audiologist.



The plastic tube

It is the plastic tube between the hearing aid and the earmold that makes sure that the sound reaches your ear. It is therefore important to take good care of that tube. It should be changed around twice a year or when it becomes hard, yellowed or can't bend easily. Old or hard tubing can give you poor sound quality from your hearing aids.



Good tubes can bend well



Old tubes need changing when they get hard or yellowed



You and your parents can visit your audiologist to have the tubing changed. He or she will have the right tool to do so - without damaging your hearing aids or your earmolds.

Accessories for your hearing aids

You might be able to use an extra attachment with your hearing aids that helps you hear even better if you are in a noisy place or far away from the person talking. This attachment for your hearing aids is part of a system called FM. The purpose of an FM system is to help bring sounds that are far away much closer, such as when your teacher is far away. It can also help when it is hard to hear because of noise, such as in a restaurant, at a birthday party or in a noisy classroom.



The part of the FM system that plugs into the bottom of your hearing aids is called the FM receiver. You may attach the receiver directly to your hearing aid or use an adapter.



Hearing aid with FM receiver

The FM receiver will receive sounds that are sent by the FM microphone. This special microphone could be worn by your teacher or parent or the microphone can also sit on the table.

The FM receiver on your hearing aid will then bring the sounds from the microphone directly and instantly to your ear. It is as if your teacher is speaking right into your ear!



Hearing aid with FM receiver



Hearing aid with FM adapter and receiver

Here are some different FM microphones for you. Remember that not all microphones look like this - you might have seen a different one that we have not shown here.





Telephones

You can listen and talk on the telephone when you are wearing your hearing aids. If you hear a whistling sound try holding the telephone differently, move the telephone around your ear and hearing aid to a different position and the whistling should go away. Some hearing aids have a special internal component called a "Telecoil" that makes it easier to hear on the phone. If your hearing aid is marked with the letter T (T for telecoil), then you can try switching to T and use the phone.

When you have finished using the phone, remember to return the switch to the letter M (M for microphone). If you don't, it might sound like your hearing aids aren't working or you might only hear a buzzing sound. Putting the switch back to the M position will make them work normally again.





If you use a cell phone while you wear hearing aids you might hear a bit of noise - but this only happens with some cell phones. Sometimes it might happen if you are sitting next to a friend who is using a cell phone. It does not mean that something is wrong with your hearing aids - don't worry! Talk to your audiologist if you hear a lot of static noise when using your cell phone.

Computers and hearing aids

You should not have any problems when you wear your hearing aids and use the computer. However, if your hearing aids are switched to the position marked with the letter T or MT (telecoil) you might hear a buzzing when your head is near the computer screen. This is not a sign that your hearing aids are not working properly - just turn your hearing aids back to the position marked with the letter M and the buzzing will stop.





If you like to listen to CDs and other audio programs on your computer, you can use the Direct Input system instead of putting on headphones and removing your hearing aids. You would use a cord that plugs into the headphone outlet of the computer while the other end plugs into your hearing aid. You will need to get the cord and a small plastic adapter for your hearing aid from your audiologist, who can tell you more and show you how this works with your hearing aids.

Hearing aids and pets

Even though a pet like a dog or a cat might be your best friend it isn't always your hearing aids' best friend.

Dogs and cats are often very curious about hearing aids - especially if they are left turned on and whistling, on a table or a counter. And if they get too curious they might chew on or even eat the hearing aids. It is therefore very important that you keep your hearing aids away from pets!



Important things to remember

Your hearing aids are little computers and it is very important to take very good care of them to keep them working. To help you do that we have made a list of things that you should remember:



1. Food and drink go in your mouth - batteries and hearing aids do not!

2. You can take baths and showers and go for a swim - but take your hearing aids off because they can't get wet



3. You can play with your pets - but don't let pets play with your hearing aids, they might eat them!



4. You can sit close to the heater or fireplace - but your hearing aids should stay away from extreme heat!

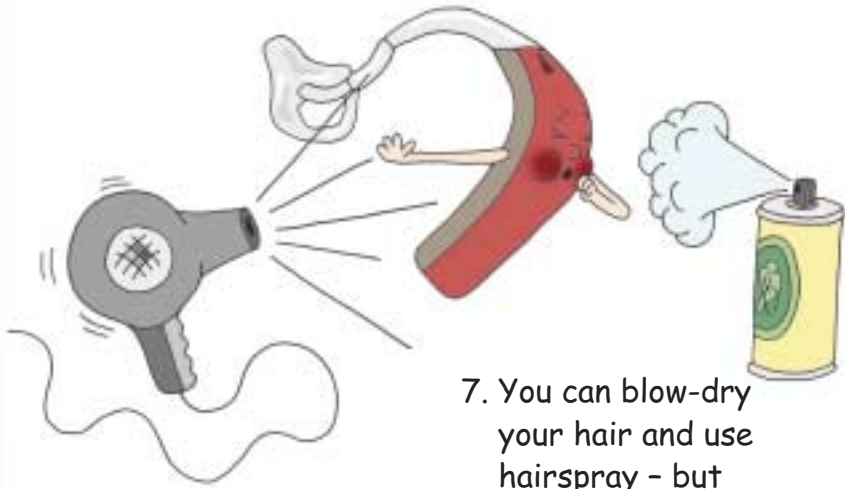




5. You can wear your hearing aids - but don't try them on your friends!

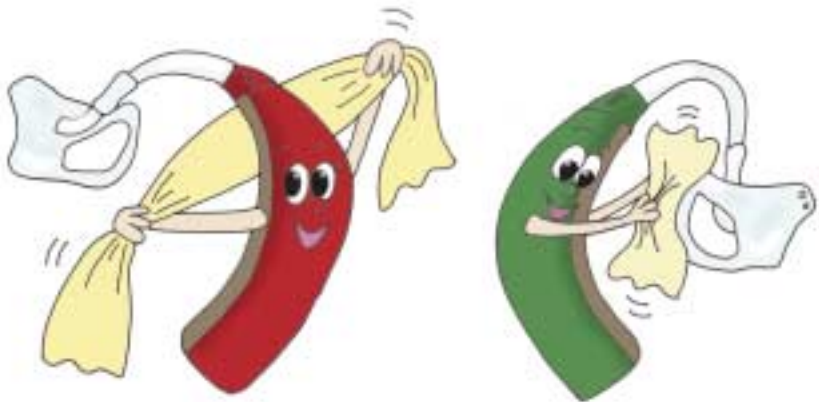


6. Legos and puzzles can be taken apart - hearing aids cannot!



7. You can blow-dry your hair and use hairspray - but never wear your hearing aids while doing so!

8. Remember to clean your hearing aids at least once a week.

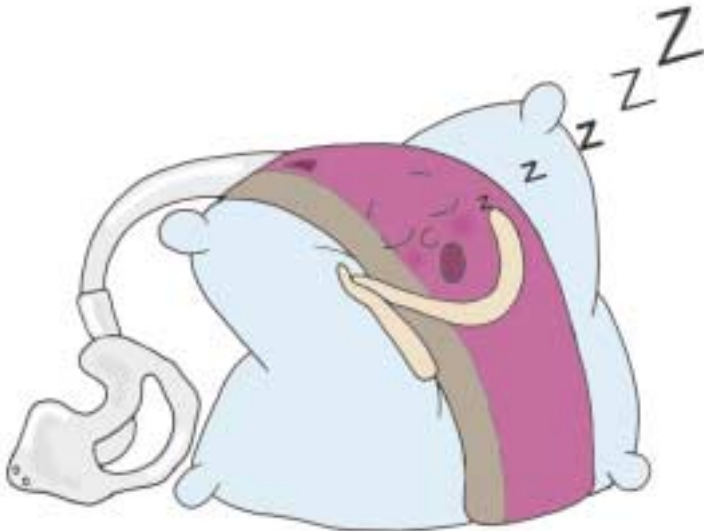


Helpful Tips

Sometimes hearing aids don't seem to work the way you think they should. Here are a few tips on what you, your parents or your teacher can check before taking them to your audiologist.

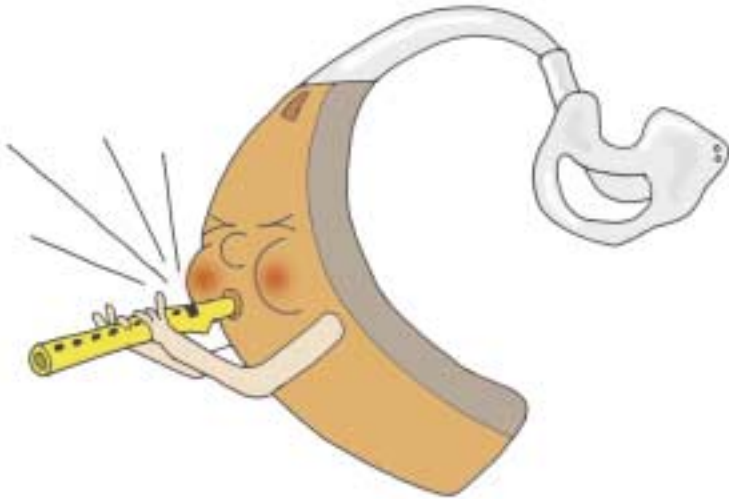
If there is no sound in your hearing aid, try to:

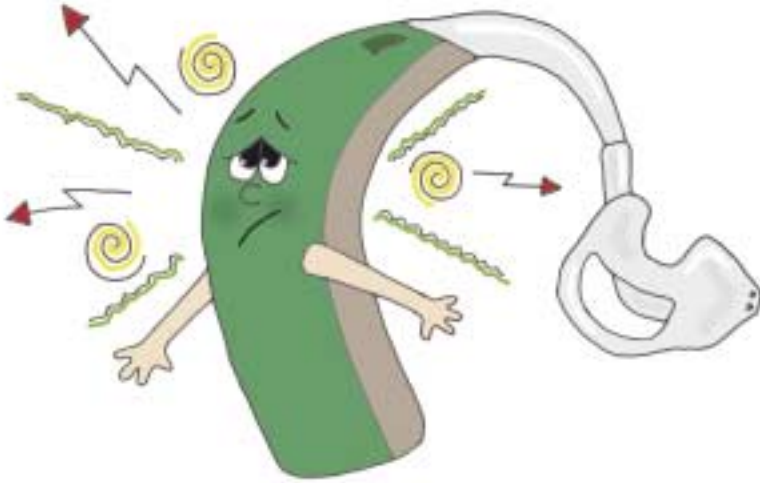
- ☆ Switch the hearing aid to the letter M (for microphone)
- ☆ Check if the battery drawer is properly closed
- ☆ Turn up the volume
- ☆ Put in a new battery - and make sure it is correctly inserted
- ☆ Clean the earmold



If your hearing aid whistles, try to:

- ☆ Clean the earmold and put the mold and hearing aid back on
- ☆ Have your ear canal examined by your doctor
- ☆ Have a new earmold made
- ☆ Turn down the volume (this will only help temporarily)





If you hear static sounds/noise, try to:

- ☆ Have your parents or teacher check the hearing aid right away
- ☆ Make sure the hearing aid is in the M/microphone position
- ☆ Put in a new battery - and make sure it is correctly inserted

You and your parents should always ask your audiologist or doctor to check your hearing aids if these tips do not help you solve the problem.



People first



We believe that it takes more than technology and audiology to create the best hearing instruments. That's why we put the individual needs and wishes of people with hearing loss first in our development of new hearing care solutions.