

Patient information on using a Hearing Aid

Who is this information for?

This information is for patients, families and carers after being advised to use hearing aids.

What are hearing aids?

Hearing aids are small electronic devices that sit in or behind the ear that takes in sound and makes it louder.

When you first receive your hearing aid, what should you do within the first few weeks?

- Try to wear your hearing aid for as long as comfortable each day; but at least 3-4 hours. This will allow you to become familiar with the controls of the hearing aid and help you to adapt to using the aid more quickly.
- Use the aid at home first. Try a conversation with only one person and make sure to watch the person speaking.
- Next, wear your hearing aid and try a small group conversation with two or three people. Do not try to hear all of the group conversation; just pay attention to each speaker.
- Listen to music or watch television. Try to increase the length of time each day that you use a hearing aid.
- Try the aid during short social or business occasions. If it is a planned meeting you are attending, attempt to get a copy of the agenda prior so that you will be aware of the discussion that will take place.
- Listen to short radio speeches or programs such as the news. If you still have difficulties hearing the TV and radio after several weeks, talk to your audiologist about assisted listening devices that may help.
- Attend church or a lecture. Try sitting at the centre aisle a few rows back from the front. If there is a PA system installed, try sitting with the aided ear within 2-3 metres of the PA speaker. If your hearing aid has a “T” switch, ask if an induction “audio loop system” is in place and working.
- Do not put up with a sound quality from your hearing aid that seems fuzzy, distorted or uncomfortably harsh. Talk to your audiologist about this.

What is required for hearing aid care?

Hearing aid care involves looking after the hearing aid, the batteries and the ear moulds:

Hearing aids

- Hearing aids should never be worn while sleeping or if an ear infection is present.
- High temperatures can damage your hearing aid.

- Never get your aid wet. It must be removed before taking a bath or shower. If the aid gets wet, dry it thoroughly with a towel. Open the battery door and on a low fan and heat setting dry out the aid further. If the aid still isn't working contact your audiologist.
- Remove your aid before using hair spray and make sure it is covered around hair spray mist.
- Store your aid in a cool dry place in an open box, out of the reach of children and pets, to let any accumulated moisture evaporate. Use a de-humidifier when in humid environments.

Batteries

- Make sure you buy fresh batteries that are the right size and type for your hearing aid. Keep them in a cool dry place.
- Insert the battery correctly. Match the + on the battery with the + on the aid.
- Throw away used batteries - do not burn them as they may explode.
- People who have obtained their hearing aid through the Commonwealth Government's Hearing Services Program can obtain free batteries on payment of a small annual fee. Contact your hearing care provider for this service.
- Batteries can go stale, be sure to check their expiry. . When purchasing batteries, make sure that you buy them somewhere that has a quick turnover.

Ear moulds

- Always check that the ear mould has been inserted correctly.
 - Ear moulds should not be painful or uncomfortable to wear and should be adjusted by the audiologist if this is the case.
 - Clean the ear mould by wiping it each day with a tissue, damp cloth or a special hearing aid cleaning solution.
 - If an ear mould becomes blocked with wax, it will stop the passage of sound into the ear canal. This wax can be removed by a wax hook, available from your audiologist.
- **Behind-the-ear hearing aids**
 - The ear moulds for behind-the-ear hearing aids need to be replaced if shrinkage or splitting is noticed, as this may cause the hearing aid to whistle and will be uncomfortable for the user. This occurs more often with the "soft type" ear moulds and these may need to be replaced every one or two years.
 - The hearing aid may whistle if the ear mould tubing has become loose, cracked or damaged. This tubing can be replaced by your audiologist.
 - Ear moulds for standard behind-the-ear hearing aids can be removed from the aid for cleaning where the tubing joins the friction hook. The ear mould can be washed in warm water using mild soap or special ear mould cleaning solution. It must be dried thoroughly before it is replaced.

Concerns or questions?

You can contact your ENT Specialist at the Melbourne ENT Group (MEG):

- Phone: 1300- 952-808
- Email: admin@melbentgroup.com.au
- Website: www.melbentgroup.com.au



Your regular Audiologist is also an excellent resource and source of support and further adjustment/consultation

Further information

The Vicdeaf Rehabilitation Team runs regular courses to help people manage their hearing loss. The attendance of family and friends is also welcomed. These courses are held in various locations. For further details, please contact Vicdeaf on (03) 9473 1111 or by:

www.vicdeaf.com.au



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