

Hearing Aid Guidance - Ear Mould Fitting

Introduction

We hope that you are happy with your new hearing aid(s). They have been programmed to your unique hearing prescription. This booklet provides further guidance on what to expect from your hearing aids, how to use them and care for them, and where to get help and advice..

Getting used to your hearing aids

It is normal for your hearing aid(s) to sound unusual at first. You will hear sounds that you have not heard for some time at that volume. You may find that your own voice sounds different when wearing the hearing aid(s). This is completely normal and will settle with consistent use. Everybody who wears hearing aid(s) for the first time goes through this adjustment period.

You will gain the most benefit from your hearing aid(s) if you wear them all day. Do not wear your hearing aid(s) when showering/bathing, swimming and when you are asleep.

What you can expect from your hearing aid(s)

Your hearing aids(s) should improve your ability to hear speech and everyday sounds, but they cannot restore perfect, natural hearing. Therefore, you may still find it challenging to hear conversation in noisy or crowded places. It is important to realise that these situations are often difficult for people with normal hearing too. Hearing aid technology will try to make all speech audible within a certain range of you, so you may still find it helpful to face the person speaking and lip read when in noisy environments.

Lost hearing aids

The hearing aids are issued at no charge to you but remain the property of the NHS. If you lose your hearing aid, you may be charged a fee. This fee is not for a replacement aid, but for the loss of NHS property. You are exempt from charge if:

- You are under 18 years of age
- You are registered blind
- You have diagnosed dementia
- You have diagnosed learning difficulties
- You are homeless

Wearing your hearing aids

Inserting the ear moulds can feel unusual to start with. Correct insertion will become easier with practice. Your Audiologist can provide advice and assistance if needed.

1.



Hold the back of the mould between your thumb and forefinger.

It is generally recommended to use your right hand to insert your right mould, and use your left hand to insert your left mould.

2.



Insert the upper part of the mould **under the fold of skin** above the ear canal entrance.

Insert the part of the mould containing the tube into your ear canal.

3.



Gently push the back part of the mould (previously held between your thumb and forefinger) into the bowl of your ear.

Sometimes it helps to use your other hand to pull gently down on your ear lobe.

4.



Now place the hearing aid behind your ear.

If the ear mould is inserted correctly, there should be no whistling feedback once you take your hand away from the hearing aid.



The upper part of the mould is **incorrectly placed on top** of the fold of skin above the ear canal entrance.



The upper part of the mould is **correctly placed UNDER** the fold of skin above the ear canal entrance.



(Photographs courtesy of Taunton and Somerset NHS Foundation Trust)

Cleaning your ear mould(s)

When removing your hearing aid at the end of the day, wipe the ear mould thoroughly with a clean damp cloth or non-fragranced facial wipe or baby wipe.

If there is any wax blocking the end of the tubing at the tip of the ear mould, use a pin or small cleaning brush to remove the wax.

You do not have to wash your ear mould, but if you want to, please ensure that you detach it from the hearing aid at the top of the tubing, where it joins the hearing aid hook/elbow. **Do not pull the tubing out of the ear mould.**

Hold the hook
between your thumb
and forefinger

Using your other hand,
gently remove the tube
from the hook

**DO NOT WASH
THE HEARING
AID**

The ear mould
and tube can be
washed



Soak the ear mould in warm (**not hot**) soapy water and then rinse it in clean cool water, ensuring that the water runs through the tubing. Shake out any water and leave the ear mould in a warm dry place overnight. Once the ear mould is completely dry it can be reattached to the hearing aid.

Using the telephone whilst wearing a hearing aid

A hearing loss can make conversation on the telephone challenging because of the absence of visual cues and lip reading. When using a telephone whilst wearing a hearing aid, you will need to hold the telephone speaker to the top of your ear rather than your ear canal. This is because the hearing aid microphones are located just behind the top of your outer ear. You may also find you need to hold the phone slightly away from your ear to avoid generating a feedback whistle from the hearing aid.

Telephones designed for people with hearing loss and hearing aid users are available to purchase from Action on Hearing Loss and Connevans. Please ask your Audiologist for further information.

Hearing aid servicing and free NHS battery provision

Your hearing aids require servicing and the tubing changed **every 6 months**. This is because the tubing becomes hard and brittle over time and this will affect the hearing aid sound quality and comfort.

For hearing aid servicing/repairs and battery collection, the Audiology department offers the following options:

Location	Access
Bexhill Hospital	By appointment only. Telephone the department on 01323 413 783 to make a repair appointment.
Conquest Hospital	Open repair session (no appointment required) every Friday 10am-12noon and 2pm-4pm.
Eastbourne Park Primary Care Centre	Open repair session (no appointment required) every Monday, Wednesday and Thursday 10am-12noon, and 2pm-4pm.

Please bring your Battery Record Book when attending the department.

You can also collect batteries and have your ear mould(s) re-tubed at alternative locations. Please ask the Audiologist for a current list.

Batteries and hearing aid servicing by post

We offer a postal service for hearing aid batteries and servicing. If you are posting your hearing aids to us, ensure they are packaged appropriately to avoid damage in the post. You must include your Battery Record Book and a stamped self-addressed envelope.

Please send your postal requests to: **Audiology Department, 1st Floor, Park Primary Care Centre, 9 Broadwater Way, Eastbourne, BN22 9PQ.**

What to do if something goes wrong with your hearing aid

Useful solutions to common issues are listed below and on the next page. If none of these resolve the issue, please contact Audiology for advice:

The ear moulds cause discomfort, rubbing or itching:

- Ensure that you have inserted the ear mould correctly.
- Contact Audiology to arrange an appointment for the ear mould to be modified or re-made. Low allergy ear mould material is available.

No sound from the hearing aid:

- Check the battery is inserted correctly.
- Replace the battery.
- Check the tubing is not blocked with wax. You can use a pin to remove any wax blocking the tubing at the tip of the ear mould. If you are unable to remove the wax, attend one of the open repair sessions at the Audiology Department.
- Check the tubing is not blocked with moisture. If it is, detach the tubing from the hearing aid and flick the ear mould downwards several times to encourage the moisture to exit. Do not blow into the tubing as your breath contains moisture which may contribute to the blockage. Place the hearing aid in a warm, dry place overnight to allow any moisture to evaporate. Low condensation tubing is available.

- If your hearing aid has a manual volume control, check it is not turned down
- If your hearing aid has a Telecoil loop program, check it is not activated.

Whistling (feedback):

- It is normal for the hearing aid to feedback if something is covering it or touching it, for example, holding a telephone too closely to the ear, or a hat touching the hearing aid.
- Check the ear mould is fully inserted.
- Check the ear mould is not cracked or loose. If it is, contact Audiology to arrange an appointment for a new ear mould to be made.
- You may have excess wax in your ears. Arrange for your GP practice nurse to check your ears and clear them of wax if required.

Frequently Asked Questions

Will wearing hearing aids make my hearing worse?

No, hearing aids will not damage your hearing or make your ears “lazy”. In fact, the more sound your ears and brain receive, the better your brain becomes at filtering out important from unimportant sounds.

Can I wear my hearing aid during airport security checks?

Yes, you can wear your hearing aid(s) when passing through security screening devices (x-ray or full body scan). Your hearing aid(s) will not be damaged by the scanners.

Is it safe to wear my hearing aid on an airplane?

It is perfectly safe to wear your hearing aid(s) on an airplane during the entire flight, including take-off and landing. The only restriction is if you have an FM device that connects to your hearing aid(s). The FM device will need to be turned off, but the hearing aid(s) can remain switched on.

Can I wear my hearing aid in the hairdressers?

If there is a risk the hearing aid(s) will get wet or covered in hairspray/product, you will need to remove them.

What should I do if my hearing aid is stolen?

Report the theft to the Police so that you can obtain a crime reference number. Then inform the Audiology department so that we can replace your hearing aid(s). We will ask you for the crime reference number. Without a crime reference number you will be charged for each lost hearing aid.

Audiology Department contact details

Telephone: (01323) 413783

Email: esht.audiology@nhs.net

Important information

This patient information is for guidance purposes only and is not provided to replace professional clinical advice from a qualified practitioner.

Your comments

We are always interested to hear your views about our leaflets. If you have any comments, please contact the Patient Experience Team - Tel: 0300 13 14 500 Ext: 5860 or by email at: esh-tr.patientexperience@nhs.net

Hand hygiene

The trust is committed to maintaining a clean, safe environment. Hand hygiene is very important in controlling infection. Alcohol gel is widely available at the patient bedside for staff use and at the entrance of each clinical area for visitors to clean their hands before and after entering.

Other formats

If you require any of the Trust leaflets in alternative formats, such as large print or alternative languages, please contact the Equality and Human Rights Department.

Tel: 0300 13 14 500

After reading this information are there any questions you would like to ask? Please list below and ask your nurse or doctor.

Reference

The following clinicians have been consulted and agreed this patient information:

Ian Woodward (Service Manager), Kate Bull (Clinical Lead)

The Clinical Specialty/Unit that have agreed this patient information leaflet:

Audiology Department

Next review date: October 2022

Responsible clinician/author: Ian Woodward (Service Manager), Kate Bull (Clinical Lead)

© East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust – www.esht.nhs.uk