

Hearing Aid Troubleshooting and Maintenance

➤ INSTRUCTIONS

➤ MAINTENANCE

➤ GUIDANCE

➤ HELP

➤ ADVICE



Adult Audiology
The Lauriston Building
Level 1, 39 Lauriston Place
Edinburgh EH3 9HA
Tel: 0131 536 1637

TYPES OF HEARING AIDS

AID WITH SLIM TUBES



HOW IT WORKS...

Sound comes in via the microphones, is **amplified** by the hearing aid (**powered by the battery**) and travels through the tubing and dome into the person's ear.

Hearing aid is **ON** when a battery is in place and the battery compartment is closed and is **OFF** when the compartment is open.



AID WITH EARMOULD



HOW IT WORKS...

Sound comes in via the microphones, is **amplified** by the hearing aid (**powered by the battery**) and travels through the hook, tubing and mould into the person's ear. The hearing aid is **ON** when a battery is in place and the battery compartment is closed and is **OFF** when the compartment is open (older aids have a switch: 0 = off and M = on).




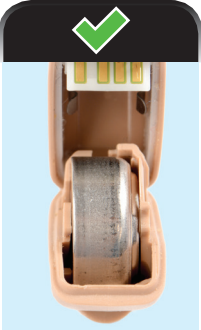



IS THE HEARING AID WORKING?




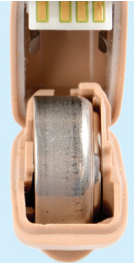


Turn the hearing aid on and cup it between your hands. If your hearing is OK, you should hear it whistle.

Newer aids usually play a little tune a few seconds after starting – turn the aid on and hold it near your ear (but not too close!) – if you hear the tune, the aid is probably working.

WHAT GOES WRONG – WHEN AID DOES NOT WORK AT ALL – COMMONEST PROBLEMS

NO POWER

No battery			Try a new battery – batteries last for 1–2 weeks but only if the aid is turned off when not used.
Battery out of charge			Try a new battery – batteries last for 1–2 weeks but only if the aid is turned off when not used.
Sticker still on battery			Remove sticker or try new battery – remove sticker first!

			
Batteries out of date (use-by date is shown on the back of the pack)			New supply needed – person should have yellow battery book – batteries available from libraries or from department.
Battery wrong way round			Remove and place in opposite way round.
Wrong battery type			Battery should fill compartment'
Battery compartment damaged			Examine for damage/rust – contact Audiology

SOUND PATH BLOCKED

When the sound path is blocked, the hearing aid is working and sound is coming in and being amplified, but it is not coming out. Usually the blockage is in the tubing, dome or earmould.

How to check: turn the aid on and (if you can) detach tubing from the body of the aid – if the blockage is in the tubing, you will hear the aid working.

	<p>Slim tubes: clean using cleaning wires – DON'T WASH</p> <p>Aid with earmoulds:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) use wax pick (available from Audiology) to remove wax from sound exit, add OR 2) remove earmould and tubing from hook and wash earmould (only for behind the ear aids with plastic earmould) <p>If does not improve, tubing will need to be changed – contact Audiology for repair appointment or use postal repair service</p>
Wax blocking tubing	
Fluid blocking tubing (aids with earmoulds)	<p>Have a look at tubing</p> <p>Clear drops – condensation from sweat – give aid a good shake – if always happening, could try air puffer or drying kit – contact Audiology</p> <p>Brown fluid – may be a sign of ear infection! Please get ears checked and contact Audiology to get tubing changed</p>

OTHER PROBLEMS

THE HEARING AID WHISTLES WHEN IT IS IN THE PERSON'S EAR

This is called 'feedback' – sound escapes from the person's ear and is picked up by the hearing aid microphone and is amplified, so more sound leaks out and more sound is amplified and so on.

Aid not inserted correctly	<p>Slim tubes Try pulling ear back and pushing tubing and dome into the ear (in the direction of the nose)</p> <p>Aids with earmoulds Most often, the top part of the mould is sticking out. When the mould is being put in the ear, the top part needs to be twisted backwards slightly to fit the whole mould into the ear completely. If this is not done correctly, pain and pressure sores may result.</p>
Earmould or slim tube old and loose	Needs to be replaced – contact Audiology.
Too much wax in the ear	<p>Sound goes in, hits the wax and bounces back. Person needs ears checked for wax and ears cleared.</p>
Tubing split	Needs to be replaced – contact Audiology.

HEARING AID STILL NOT WORKING AT ALL!

If it is not the battery or a blockage in the tubing, it is harder to fix!

Aid is set on a program which turns the microphone off (eg loop or T program)	Turning aid off and on resets back to normal program.
Hook of an aid with earmould is blocked	A new hook is needed – contact Audiology.
Microphones faulty	Aid needs to be replaced – contact Audiology.
Aid faulty – not working or sound distorted	Aid needs to be replaced – contact Audiology.
Aid broken or damaged or been through wash or vacuum cleaner	Aid needs to be replaced – contact Audiology.

HEARING AID IS WORKING BUT THE PERSON IS NOT HEARING WELL

Hearing aids need maintenance every 6 – 9 months especially when the tubing gets old or hard	Contact department to arrange a suitable appointment (only the aids need to come to Audiology – someone else can bring them to the appointment) or use postal repair service
Person's ears are blocked with wax or the person has developed an ear infection	Please get person's ears checked for wax or infection and treated as appropriate.
Person's hearing has changed	Hearing tests are usually needed every 3 – 4 years. To ask for a new hearing test, contact Audiology directly. If hearing deteriorates more rapidly, ask the GP for early referral to Audiology.
Hearing aid is old and no longer working well	Average age of a hearing aid is about 5 years. Older aids need to be upgraded – contact Audiology.

Most hearing aids also have a program button and/or a volume control but both of these have to be activated by the audiologist – so may not be working even if the buttons and switches are there. If in doubt, contact the department.

Hearing aids are colour-coded! **Right is marked RED** and **left is marked BLUE**.

Information and Guidance on Earmould washing and retubing reproduced with permission of University Hospital Leicester NHS Trust.

HEARING AID BATTERIES

To use a battery:

- remove the sticker
- open the battery compartment which is usually near the bottom of the aid. Pull down the small catch to open the compartment. Some older aids have a push button instead
- batteries have a positive and a negative terminal marked on the battery and they must be put in the correct way round.

Batteries

- are supplied by the Audiology Department
- are available from the Audiology Department (in person or using the postal service), from some community health centres and GPs and from local libraries. The person (or their friend or relative) just needs to take along their yellow battery record book
- supplied in packs of 6 – must be used before the use-by date (printed on the pack)
- are air-activated: to activate them, the sticker needs to be removed before use. Once the sticker is removed, the battery will start to run down and will run out of charge within a few weeks, even if not used. Remove batteries from unused aids
- usually need to be changed about every 1 – 2 weeks (but more often if hearing aid is not being turned off at night)



Take care to keep batteries away from children and pets.

Used batteries can be recycled with other household batteries – most large supermarkets have battery recycling cans.

RETUBING YOUR EARMOULD

You should replace the plastic tube inside your earmould approximately every 6-9 months, or when the tube becomes discoloured and hard.

This will help to maintain good sound quality and comfort. If the tube becomes too hard it can snap and get stuck inside the mould. If this happens you will not be able to wear the hearing aid until the broken tube is removed and replaced.

Replacement tubing is available from the Audiology department

Please follow these simple instructions on how to replace the tube. If you find it difficult to handle small objects or have eyesight problems and cannot replace the tube yourself, then please ask a friend or relative to help, or book a repair appointment and we will do it for you.

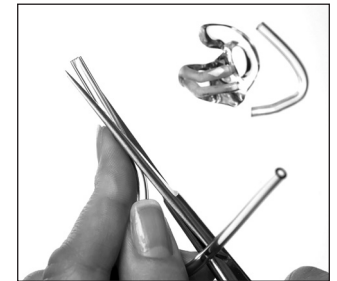
Hold the tube in one hand and the hearing aid hook in the other, twist and pull firmly apart.



Pull the old piece of tubing out of the mould. **KEEP THIS PIECE OF TUBING**



Cut the new piece of tubing to a long thin point.



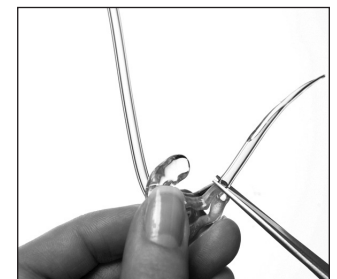
Insert the pointed end into the mould as shown. If there are two holes in the mould you should use the top one.



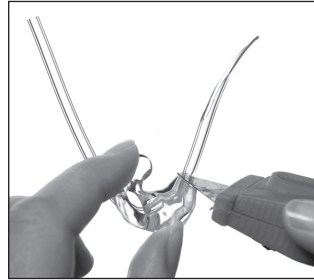
Pull the tubing through until it reaches the bend.



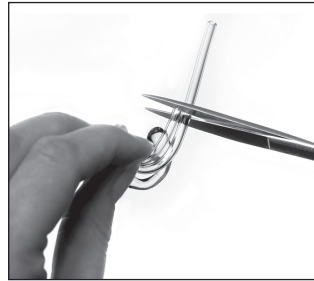
Cut off the point 'flush' with the mould using a sharp pair of scissors.



Alternatively, using a sharp knife can create a closer cut. Place the mould down on a hard surface if using a knife.



Use the old piece of tube as a measure for the new piece.



If the hearing aid is loose over the top of the ear, try shortening the tube a little as the old piece may have stretched upon removal.

If the old piece of tube has been lost or damaged, place the mould in the ear and the hearing aid behind. Ask someone to mark with a pen where the two meet.

Remember to allow a little extra as the tube pushes over the end of the hearing aid.

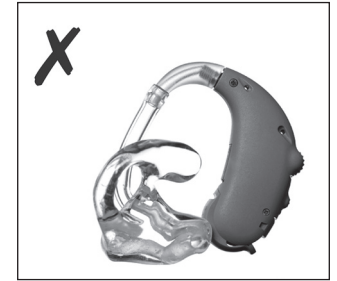
Push the end of the hearing aid hook firmly inside the new piece of tubing.



The mould should point away from the hearing aid as shown in the picture.



Remember that the mould should face away from the hearing aid and not towards it as shown in the picture.



CLEANING SLIM TUBES

You need a plastic cleaning wire. If you don't have one of these, please contact the Audiology department and ask for one to be sent to you.

If you have 2 hearing aids, clean one at a time to avoid confusing left (marked blue) and right (marked red) aids.

Remove the tube from the main part of the hearing aid:

- by unscrewing the top of the tube anticlockwise or
- by turning the tubing to 9 o'clock or 3 o'clock and then pulling it away from the hearing aid (for aids with a bayonet-type fitting).

Thread the cleaning wire through the tubing like a pipe cleaner, starting from the end that was attached to the hearing aid, to push any wax or debris out of the tubing. Push the wire all the way through.

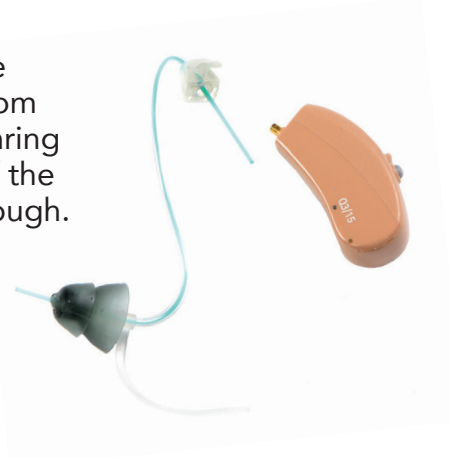
Re-attach the tubing back on to the hearing aid:

- by screwing on clockwise
- by pushing straight back on to the hearing aid.

Check that the tubing is securely attached to the aid.

Never wash this type of tubing in water to clean it, as the water will get stuck in the tubing and will block any sound getting through.

Wipe the outside of the plastic dome with a damp cloth; something like a baby wipe is ideal.



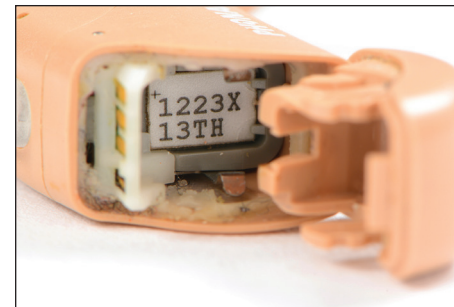
WHOSE HEARING AID IS IT?

WEARING THE WRONG HEARING AID CAN HARM!

The hearing aid case shows the manufacturer and model of the hearing aid:



Each hearing aid should have a colour marker for left (blue) and right (red) and also has a unique Serial Number, – usually on the case or inside the battery compartment. The image below shows a Phonak aid.



Earmoulds usually also have the manufacturer's name and a unique serial number (or the patient's surname) written on them – usually in **blue for the left ear** and in **red for the right ear**.

NOTES

**IF YOU RECORD THIS INFORMATION, YOU CAN MATCH UP
A LOST HEARING AID WITH ITS OWNER MUCH MORE EASILY**

Name	LEFT			RIGHT		
	Manufacturer and model	Hearing Aid Serial No.	Earmould Serial No. or name	Manufacturer and model	Hearing Aid Serial No.	Earmould Serial No. or name

All hearing aids issued are NHS property and must be returned when no longer required. Please take care of your hearing aids, as lost aids may incur a charge.

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