



## Introduction

How to Look After Your Child's Hearing Aid

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# How to Look After Your Child's Hearing Aid

This leaflet is full of useful information to help you get the most out of your child's hearing aids.

Having a new hearing aid can be an exciting time for your child or they may be quite nervous about trying something new. The Paediatric Audiology team are here to help you and your child. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact us at any time. Our contact details can be found on the back of this leaflet.

## Meet the team

Your child will have regular appointments in the Audiology department, now that they have a hearing aid. We have a small team of specialist Paediatric Audiologists who are all very experienced at working with children with hearing loss.

Your child may have appointments with any of the team, so you may meet Claire, Charlotte, Jo or Leanne at any time.

We look forward to meeting you!

## Parts of your child's hearing aid

A hearing aid is made up of different parts as follows:

Hearing aid

Earmould

Tubing

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All parts need to be connected properly for the hearing aid to work.

The hearing aid needs a battery to work. Each battery should last about 10 days, but we recommend changing your child's battery once a week. You can tell that the battery is working, if you switch the hearing aid on and cup it in your hands – it should make a whistling noise.

Your Audiologist should have provided some additional instructions on the use of your child's particular model of hearing aid.

## Inserting your child's earmould

Inserting the earmould can be tricky until you are used to it. Take your time and practise to make sure that it is correctly fitted in your child's ear.

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If your child is older, they may be able to fit the earmould themselves, but they may need help to begin with.

The most common fault is failure to get the top point behind the ridge of skin at the top of the ear, which may cause the aid to whistle and feel uncomfortable.

- To insert, hold the back curve of the earmould between the index finger and the thumb.
- Take the earmould towards the back of the ear and push it forwards.
- The hearing aid can then be lifted behind the ear.

 **Correctly inserted**

 **Incorrectly inserted**

To make it easier to insert the earmould we would recommend watching the following video online:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QNe3XJEcZKo>

### Cleaning your child's earmould

It is important that your child's earmould is kept clean. The earmould can be wiped or washed as described below, but it is important that the hearing aid that sits behind the ear is not washed (as this should not get wet).

- You should clean your child's earmould once a week.
- Separate the hearing aid from the earmould by pulling the flexible plastic tube away from the hooked part of the aid. Take care not to pull the tubing out of the mould.
- Wash the earmould and tube in warm soapy water. Use a nailbrush to remove any wax from the tube.
- Rinse the earmould in clean water. Blow through the tubing to remove any water to make sure no droplets

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are left in it.

- Leave the earmould and the attached tubing to dry in a warm, but not hot place.
- When you are sure that the earmould is dry, put it back onto the hearing aid. Make sure that the curve of the mould is in the same direction as the curve of the hearing aid (see picture on page 1).

## Replacing the tubing

Every 5 -6 months the tubing in your child's earmould will need replacing. To do this, follow these steps.

1. Pull the tubing out of the earmould and keep it – you will need it later.

2. Take a new piece of tubing and taper one end so you can thread it right through the canal in earmould.



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the

3. Pull the point of the plastic that emerges at the tip until the opposite end of the tubing is standing roughly upright.



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4. Cut off the tapered end, making it smooth.



5. Using your old piece of tubing as a template measure the correct length of the tubing cut as shown.



6. The earmould should be re-attached to the hearing aid with the curve of the mould matching the curve of the aid.

### Tips on getting your child to wear their hearing aids

It is important for your child to wear their hearing aids as much as possible and ideally every child should be using their aid/s for 10-12 hours each day.

We know that getting your child to wear their hearing aids can sometimes be difficult. Some ideas that can be useful to help encourage children to wear their aids are:

- Making wearing the aids part of your child's dressing/undressing routine in the morning and evening.
- Young children may benefit from a distraction when the aids are being inserted, such as a favourite toy or TV programme.
- Try to talk about your child's hearing aids in a positive way.
- If your child becomes very upset, when trying to insert their

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hearing aids, then perhaps try again later.

- If your child pulls their aids out often, then try to put them straight back in, as soon as you can, without a fuss (some young children pull their hearing aids out to get attention).



### Keeping the hearing aids in place

Behind the ear hearing aids can sometimes be difficult to keep in place on babies and small children. There are lots of different options available to help keep aids in place such as:

- Sticky pads or tape which attach between the hearing aid and the skin behind the ear.
- Hearing aid retainers, known as “huggies” which are thin plastic tubes that go around the ear and attach to the hearing aid to hold it in place.
- Soft head bands and caps for young babies.

If you are worried about your child losing their hearing aids, you could try clips which attach to their clothing.

Some of these items are available from your Audiologist

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and others will need to be purchased.

It is also important to ensure your child has well-fitting earmoulds. If you think your child needs new earmoulds because they are loose or cracked, please contact us to make an appointment. You do not need to wait for your next scheduled review appointment.

### When things go wrong

#### Your child's hearing aid does not work at all

- Check the hearing aid is switched on and at the correct volume.
  - Check the battery - if it is a new one check that it is in the right way. If it is old, replace it.

#### Whistling noise (sometimes called feedback)

- Check that the hearing aid earmould is inserted properly and reposition if necessary.
- Check the earmould, if it is loose or cracked it may cause whistling. If this is the case, a new mould will need to be made.
- If the mould is ok but the hearing aid is still whistling in the ear it may be due to wax. Clean the earmould and consider administering olive oil to the ear at night to help resolve the wax.

#### Buzzing or crackling sound

- Check the battery.
  - Inspect the casing of the hearing aid, if you notice



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cracks the hearing aid may have become faulty and will need replacing.

### Crackling noise /sound comes and goes

The hearing aid may be intermittent if the battery connection is loose.

## Hearing aid repairs

If your child's hearing aid is faulty and you are unable to fix the problem at home, please contact us using the details below. We may be able to send you replacement parts by post.

### Audiology Hearing Aid Repairs:

Telephone: 01603 287284

Email: [audioadmin@nnuh.nhs.uk](mailto:audioadmin@nnuh.nhs.uk)

Please be aware that the previous 'drop-in repairs' sessions have closed. Please **do not attend** the hospital without an appointment.

## New earmoulds

If your child needs a new earmould please contact us using the details below, in order to arrange an appointment for an impression to be taken.

### Audiology appointments:

Telephone: 01603 287284

Email: [audioadmin@nnuh.nhs.uk](mailto:audioadmin@nnuh.nhs.uk)

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Children's hearing aid appointments are also available at Cromer hospital and these can also be booked using the details above.

### To get batteries

Batteries are provided free of charge for your child's hearing aids.

To obtain batteries

#### 1. **By post**

Send your child's hearing aid card to the address on the back of this book. New batteries will be sent by return of post.

#### 2. **By phone**

Telephone the number below to request batteries to be sent by post.

**Audiology battery hotline - 01603 288918**

#### 3. **By email**

Email [audioadmin@nnuh.nhs.uk](mailto:audioadmin@nnuh.nhs.uk) to request new batteries are sent by post.

Please **do not attend** the hospital to collect batteries in person.

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## Battery safety

It is dangerous for a child to swallow a battery. Young children can also get small batteries stuck in their nose and ears. Make sure you do the following:

- Store batteries in a safe place, out of the reach of children.
- Leave your child's hearing aid in a safe place, when it is not in use.
- Dispose of used batteries carefully.
- Try not to let young children see batteries being changed. It is safer if they do not know that the battery compartment opens.

Your child's hearing aid can also be "tamperproof". This means that it can be set up so that the battery compartment cannot be opened by your child. Your Audiologist should have shown you how the "tamperproof" feature works on your child's hearing aid, at their fitting appointment. If you are unsure of how to lock the battery compartment, please refer to your child's hearing aid instruction booklet or contact your Audiologist for instructions on how to do this.

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## Communication tips

When your child is wearing their hearing aid there may still be occasions when they find it difficult to hear clearly. It is therefore important to try and improve the listening environment for your child if possible. For example:

- When speaking to your child, make sure you are facing your child and maintain good eye contact.
- Try to be on the same level as your child and allow some space for signing or lip-reading.
- Use a well-lit room and don't have your back to a window, as this creates a shadow and makes it difficult to read facial expressions or lipread.
- Speak clearly, naturally and at a normal pace. Don't shout, as it can appear to your child that you are angry and it also distorts lip patterns.
- Children with hearing aids often find it difficult to pick up speech when it is noisy. Try to make sure that background noise is kept to a minimum. For example, turn off the television or radio when reading a story together.
- A room that is carpeted or curtained will also help to cut down the effects of noise in a room.
- Use your hands and facial expressions to gesture and support what you are saying.

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## Working together

We work alongside many other professionals who can provide information and support for you and your child.

## Educational Sensory Support Services

Sensory Support Services are part of the local authority. Children with permanent hearing loss can be referred to these services. Support & information is provided by Teachers of the Deaf (also known as Teachers of the Hearing Impaired) in the child's home, at nurseries and playgroups or in school and college.



## NDCS

The National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS) is a UK charity dedicated to providing support, information and advice for deaf children, young people and their families. Have a look at their website and check out their videos on how to look after hearing aids on their YouTube page: [youtube.com/ndcswebteam](https://www.youtube.com/ndcswebteam)

Join our local NDCS group!

Make friends with other families with deaf and partially hearing children.

Email: [norfolk@ndcsgroup.org.uk](mailto:norfolk@ndcsgroup.org.uk)

# How to Look After Your Child's Hearing Aid

## Frequently asked questions

### What should I do if my child loses their hearing aid?

Hearing aids are expensive pieces of medical equipment, so please try your best to look after them. We do, however, understand that children may occasionally lose their aids. If this occurs, please call us to arrange an appointment for a new earmould to be made.

### What should I do if my child has an ear infection?

If you think your child has an ear infection you should seek advice from your GP or NHS 111. If your child's ear is leaking fluid, then they should not use their hearing aid until the infection has been treated.

### Can I apply for Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for my child?

Some children are suitable for DLA financial support. The NDCS has more information on how to apply. Please contact us if you require a supporting statement for your application.

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## Children's Hearing Services Working Group (CHSWG)

Did you know that there is a CHSWG for the Norfolk & Norwich area? This is a group of parents & professionals who meet 3 times a year to discuss issues relating to hearing loss for children and the services they are receiving. If you would like to be part of improving local services for hearing impaired children then let us know or if you have an issue that you would like to be discussed at the next CHSWG meeting, please email [paedaudio@nnuh.nhs.uk](mailto:paedaudio@nnuh.nhs.uk)

### Contact us

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