

You and Your New Hearing Aid(s)

Corvallis Hearing Center
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Hours: Monday-Thursday 10:00am - 5:00 pm
Closed between 12:00pm-1:30pm for lunch

Visit our website: <http://betterhearingus.com/>
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/corvallishearing>

Hearing Aid Care and Maintenance

1. **Your hearing aids are color-coded for right and left ears.** You can tell which hearing aid goes in which ear by the color on the shell or the color printing on the case.
BLUE = Left Hearing aid **RED = Right Hearing aid**
2. **Keep your hearing aids DRY.** Hearing aids are water resistant but NOT water proof. If you perspire often, ask for a dehumidifier.
3. **Clean your hearing aids 2-3 times a week.** Clean the hearing aids by wiping them off with a baby wipe and use a clean brush to remove any wax from any holes, all surface areas, and push buttons. Hold the hearing aid so the holes are pointed downward during cleaning, so the wax falls out of the hearing aid and not into the holes of the hearing aid. Carefully brush around the volume control and battery door.
4. **Store the hearing aids in a dehumidifier or hearing aid case** with their battery compartments open whenever not in use. Do not store the hearing aids in the bathroom. Humidity can damage the hearing aids. Please DO NOT place your hearing aid(s) on a countertop, tabletop or directly in your pocket without putting the hearing aid(s) in a case. This prevents them from falling off into garbage cans, toilets, onto the floor, lost under furniture, or pets from getting ahold of it.
5. **Keep your hearing aids safe.** Do not wrap the hearing aids in a tissue or put them in your pockets. This is how a hearing aid gets lost, thrown away or end up in the washing machine.
6. **Keep your hearing aids away from pets.** Dogs and cats will chew on and destroy your hearing aids. They will find the hearing aids when left on a coffee table or end table.
7. **Protect your hearing aids from extreme temperatures and harsh substances.** Do not use a hair dryer or hair spray with the hearing aids in your ears. Do not put the aids in a glove compartment or on a hot surface. Don't wear the hearing aids during an MRI.
8. **The average life span of a hearing aid battery with 10-14 hours of daily use is about:**
 1. **10A Batteries = 3 Days**
 2. **312A Batteries = 5 Days**
 3. **13A Batteries = 7 Days**
9. **Batteries should be stored away from children and pets.** Keep the batteries away from your medications and out of your medicine cabinet. Batteries have been mistaken for pills and have been swallowed. They are very dangerous if swallowed and can cause serious injury.
If a battery is swallowed, you should **IMMEDIATELY** call the **NATIONAL BUTTON BATTERY INGESTION HOTLINE: (202) 625-3333.**

Adjusting to Hearing Aid(s)

How quickly you adjust to your hearing aid(s) will depend on how often you wear them. If you wear your hearing aid(s) consistently all day every day, except when sleeping or when showering, you will get used to them much faster. It is recommended that you wear your hearing aid(s) 8-14 hours a day, seven days a week, whether you are speaking with someone or not. Your brain has to get used to the environmental sounds as well as speech sounds. Your brain can only learn to “tune out” background or environmental noise when you are using the hearing aid(s) consistently.

Hearing aid(s) are not a cure for hearing loss:

- Hearing aid(s) do not cure your hearing or return it to normal like corrective lens (glasses) do. If this happened, most people would not be able to tolerate the volume.

Hearing aid(s) will not block out all background noise:

- It is not possible for an electronic device to amplify one person’s voice and block out all other voices or sounds.
- When you begin wearing your hearing aid(s) you will notice an increase in the noise levels around you. This noise has always been there, but with your hearing loss you probably were not noticing the background noise.
- The good news is that if you are able to hear soft background noises (for example: lights, fans, computers, other talkers, shoes while walking, rustling papers, clothes, etc.) You are better able to hear soft speech sounds.
- Hearing in noise is similar to driving in the rain at night: even with well-fit glasses that allow you to see clearly during the day; many people still have difficulty driving at night in the rain. Most likely if you are in a noisy restaurant and having difficulties hearing normal hearing people may be struggling too.

Speech reading is necessary:

- You may not be able to understand all conversations. The poorer hearing becomes, the greater difficulty you will have understanding conversations.
- To improve your ability to understand conversation you must use your eyes when listening. Watch the face of the person that is speaking.
- Even when wearing hearing aid(s), you must rely on lip reading.

Getting used to background sounds:

When you first receive your hearing aid(s) it is normal for there to be an adjustment period. Most people will adjust quickly, within a few months. It is important to understand that the brain will naturally “tune out” background sounds that are consistently heard over time. If you are using your hearing aid(s) on a regular basis your brain will have a chance to categorize background sounds as being non-meaningful and this is when the brain will simply ignore those sounds. At first, your brain is overloaded with both speech sounds and the environmental sounds. With time and consistent use your brain will learn to “tune out” the background sounds and focus on the speech sounds that are in front of you. Some people will take more time to adjust. Some people will always be more sensitive to background sounds. If you feel there is a need for a sound quality adjustment keep in mind it may just be a matter of time for your brain to adjust. If you have not adjusted in a few months of 16 hours daily use, a follow-up appointment may be requested for a sound quality adjustment of the hearing aids.

Communication Tips:

General:

- Even with your hearing aid(s), you must use your eyes when listening. Watch the face of the person who is speaking.
- You will probably not be able to understand what someone is saying if he/she is in another room. Many people with normal hearing can't do this.
- Try to have conversations in a quiet area – turn off the TV or other background noise if possible.
- Tell the speaker that you have a hearing loss and suggest that they can help you understand better by:
 - Facing you
 - Speaking louder but not shouting
 - Speaking more slowly
 - Getting your attention before speaking to you
 - Not speaking into your ear, but making sure you can see their face.

At Lectures/ Meetings:

- Sit in front where you can easily see the speaker's face.
- Ask for assistive listening devices at the theater, movies, church or seminars. Such devices are usually available free of charge at the box office or front desk. If you already own a remote microphone you can ask the speaker to wear it or go the front desk and ask the sound engineer to plug your remote microphone into the PA system.

At Restaurants:

- Try to avoid restaurants with loud music. Go to smaller restaurants or avoid peak times at larger ones. Select restaurants with carpeting, table cloths and wall covering to help reduce background noises.
- Asked to be seated in a booth rather than at a regular table. Do not sit near the kitchen, the bar or the wait station.
- At a large table you may only be able to understand conversation with those people who are seated closest, directly across from you, or directly to your sides, when facing them. When in this situation try to sit in the middle not at the end of the table.
- Choose a restaurant that has good lighting.
- Use your remote microphone by clipping it on the person you are having a hard time understanding or if in a big group clip the microphone on to the menu in the center of the table. Putting it in the middle of the table will work with 4-6 people.

In Groups:

- One-on-one conversations or small group conversations will be easier to follow than large group conversations.
- Anticipate difficult situations and plan ahead on ways to minimize problems.

Troubleshooting Hearing Aids:

There is a troubleshooting guide below. Please check to see if there is anything you can do at home to fix the hearing aid problem before calling for an appointment. Many times a person can solve their hearing aid problems by cleaning the hearing aid, or changing the battery. If the hearing aid is still not working properly after troubleshooting, schedule an appointment.

Problem	Try:
Hearing aid is dead (no sounds) or weak.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• New battery• Make sure battery is not upside down.• Make sure battery door is closed all the way.• Clean opening of hearing aid or earmold.• If problem persists make an appointment.
Hearing aid cuts in and out or you hear static.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• New battery• Clean hearing aid or earmold• Put hearing aid in drying container overnight.• If problem persists make an appointment.
Feedback (whistling)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Take aid/earmold out and put it back in. Be sure you have good insertion.• If it's still whistling make an appointment.
Your Hearing aid got wet	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Remove the battery as soon as possible2. Place your hearing aid in the dehumidifier overnight.3. Do not try a new battery until the next morning.4. NEVER use a hair dryer on your hearing aid or put your hearing aid in the microwave or oven.5. If hearing aid does not power on or seems weak make an appointment.

Dos and Don'ts for Effective Communication When Speaking with Individuals with Hearing Impairment.

- You must get the person's attention before you start a conversation.
- You must speak face-to-face at all times. If not, there is probably going to be a communication breakdown. You will then have to repeat it again.
- You must not speak to a hearing impaired person from another room.
- You must not speak with your back towards a hearing impaired person or with their back towards you. Your voice is energy. Your energy has to be directed towards their ear (or their hearing aid). "The shortest distance from A to B, is a straight line."
- You must not start to speak and then walk away.
- You must not start to speak and turn away (in a car, on the couch, etc.)
- You must not speak in competition with other noises if possible. Other noise (TV's, radio's, dishwashers, other conversations, kid's toys, etc.) will weaken your "voice energy". The louder the noise, the closer your "voice energy" has to be to the person's ear (or hearing aid). Sometimes, depending on how loud the background noise energy is, your "voice energy" will not be able to penetrate the "background noise energy". You will have to move out of the noisy area to be able to communicate.
- You must not cover or obstruct your mouth while speaking. Lip reading is an important part of communication. Your eyes help your ears.
- You must speak distinctly but do not shout. Shouting makes your voice harder to hear. It raises your pitch into the "high-pitch hearing loss range".
- You must be as patient as possible. Understand, that even when a person is wearing a hearing aid, they are still significantly hearing impaired. A hearing aid only gives the user better hearing while using a hearing aid. Even people with mild hearing losses will need these strategies. Also understand no hearing aid can return hearing to normal.