

# Hearing Aid Information



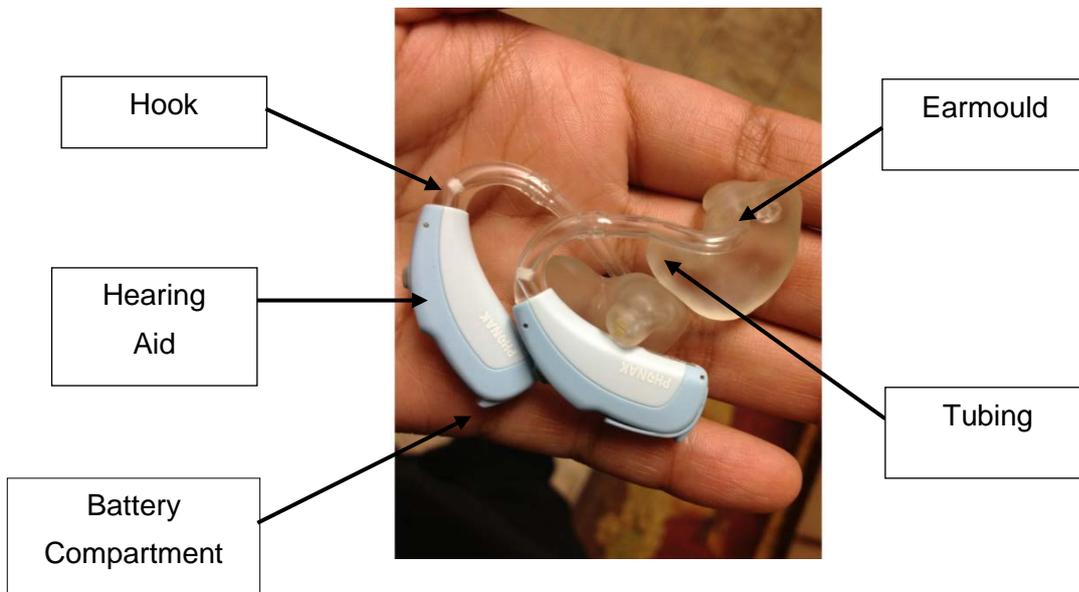
**'We'll help you to hear the world around you'**

Design by Natalie Card, age 10

Slogan by Robert Agar, age 13

## What is a hearing aid?

A hearing aid is an amplification device, and its main aim is to amplify sounds so that your child can hear them. The sound vibrations entering the ear canal are made louder so that the impaired ear (either middle ear; cochlea or auditory nerve) can send a signal to the brain. The priority of the hearing aid is to make many speech sounds audible, so that your child has the opportunity to develop aural language.



Children with hearing loss undergo regular review appointments in the department. This is to ensure that should changes in the hearing arise, the hearing aids are set accurately for the degree and nature of hearing loss the child presents with. This is achieved via real ear measures and matching the hearing aids to a child's individual prescription, which maximises the speech whilst limiting loudness for safety.

## What is an ear mould?

An ear mould allows sound to be delivered into the child's ear, whilst keeping the hearing aid securely in place. Ear moulds are custom made for each child and need to be changed periodically as your child grows. There is a guide below to show how often children should have impressions taken.

<b>Newborn to 3 months:</b>	Every two weeks
<b>3-6 months:</b>	Every two – four weeks
<b>From 6 months:</b>	Every month
<b>From 1-2 years:</b>	Every three – six months
<b>Older children:</b>	Every year
<b>Teenagers:</b>	At the discretion of your clinician

Ear moulds are made out of a silicon material and should be tightly fitted into the ear to ensure that all the amplified sound from the hearing aid is directed onto the eardrum. Loosely fitted moulds can introduce feedback / whistling from the hearing aids (see section overleaf). If your child has too much wax or there is an active infection in the ear, we will be unable to take an impression of the ear. In this case, we will provide advice for the best course of action.

Pre-school children can get their ear moulds taken at Chatty Monkeys. Chatty Monkeys is a pre-school group for hearing impaired children and their families, which is led by the Sensory Consortium, and meets every other week in term times only. Otherwise you can request an appointment using the contact information at the end of this leaflet.

### Handy tips on getting babies and young children to wear hearing aids

When hearing aids are initially fitted, many parents report difficulties in trying to get young children to wear them. There are some helpful tips below on how to introduce the hearing aids and establish them in your child's life. It is essential that parents portray a positive attitude to wearing hearing aids, as their child will often reflect and adopt this attitude themselves.

The main aim will be to try and get your child to wear the hearing aids all the time they are awake. This ensures that they will have full access to all sounds around them, which are vital when trying to develop everyday listening skills.

Think how much you continuously use your ears to listen to the surrounding environment and how these sounds give you information about what's happening. Your child needs to be exposed to these sounds as well to enable them to detect and discriminate them and develop their understanding and skills rather than only being exposed to them for short periods of the day.

Evidence has shown that when children wear their hearing aids for more hours during the day, this increases their exposure to language, which has been directly linked with better communication.

**The hints and tips that are listed on the next page are recommended by the NDCS (National Deaf Children's Society), in trying to get babies and children used to wearing their hearing aids. Further information leaflets can be found at [www.ndcs.org.uk](http://www.ndcs.org.uk) or can be provided by your audiologist.**



### Inserting hearing aids:

- By warming the ear mould in your hand this can help with the acceptance of the hearing aid due to the following reasons:  
Less of a shock due to being closer to body temperature.  
The ear mould will be more pliable which makes it easier to insert and more comfortable.
- Parents can insert the hearing aid prior to the baby or young child waking up. (However please never leave a young child alone with a hearing aid as they may put it in their mouth).
- Many babies and children react well to routine so introducing the hearing aids as part of the dressing and undressing routine can help to promote wearing them whilst they are awake.

### Once hearing aids are inserted:

- Some children enjoy wearing their hearing aids from the moment they are introduced.
- Other children have to build up the length of time that they wear their hearing aids. You could start with just a couple of minutes several times a day.
- Try to establish with your child that you or a responsible adult is the person that takes the hearing aid out and not the child that is pulling them out.
- Distract your child with a favourite toy or TV program, as they will then associate wearing the hearing aids with completing fun activities.
- If your child removes the hearing aids when they are subjected to loud sounds, contact the audiology department as the hearing aids may require a slight adjustment.
- You could introduce a reward system or sticker if a child wears their hearing aids.
- Some parents report that their children won't wear their hearing aids after school. You could try giving them a specified break, maybe for 30 minutes, and then start using the hearing aid(s) again. Communication and learning continues at home as well as school and being able to hear conversation at the dinner table or listen to the TV at a normal volume will make life easier for everyone.

### Removing hearing aids:

- Keep the hearing aids in a special and safe place. For young children take their hearing aid out and along with your child take them to the special place and put the aids away. They will learn to put the aids in the special place when they take them out, and you won't have to go looking for them every time they disappear.
- For older children who are old enough and are developing independence then they should be encouraged to remove their own hearing aids.

- Don't force your child to wear their hearing aids. It is much better to encourage your child to like wearing them. It is better for them (and you) in the long run if they have a positive attitude towards their aids.

### Further help:

- Attend Chatty Monkeys pre-school group for children who have hearing impairment under the age of three. This will allow you to meet other parents so they can share their experiences with you. Your child will also see other children wearing hearing aids and then know that they are not the only one. There is also an audiologist present at each of the meetings, who can take impressions (ear moulds) for your child.

### Hearing aid options:

- The Audiology Service provides a variety of hearing aid options:
  - Hearing aids themselves come in different colours and can be decorated and personalised for each child.
  - Ear moulds come in different colours or with transfers.
- Young children often decorate their hearing aids with stickers. However just ensure that the microphone port is not being blocked by any stickers as this will have an effect on the overall sound.
- There are many websites which show methods of decorating hearing aids, these include:
  - [http://www.ndcs.org.uk/family\\_support/childhood\\_deafness/hearing\\_aids/decorating\\_and.html](http://www.ndcs.org.uk/family_support/childhood_deafness/hearing_aids/decorating_and.html)
  - <https://pimpmyhearingaids.wordpress.com/>
  - <http://mylittleears.com/shop/>



**These tips are only a starting point, please feel free to contact the department if you have any questions or you need some advice.**

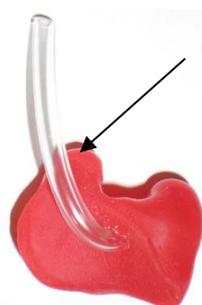
### Daily listening checks:

Daily listening and hearing checks are recommended for young children with the listening clip provided in the care kit. Should a fault be found then details can be found at the end of this leaflet about what to do next.

## Fitting the hearing aid

Concentrate on the ear mould first – the hearing aid just loops over the ear once the ear mould is in place. Make sure the ear mould is inserted correctly in the ear. Incorrect insertion can cause feedback (whistling) and can feel uncomfortable.

1. Hold the back of the ear mould with your finger and thumb and bring the ear mould back past the ear in the position it will be when wearing it. If you are teaching your child to put in their own hearing aid in it is usually easier for them to use their right hand for their right ear and their left hand for their left ear



Top of ear mould

The top of the ear mould goes under the fold near the top of the ear. The part which holds the tubing goes down into the ear canal.

2. Fit the top and canal parts of the mould into the ear. Make sure that the top is tucked under the fold of the ear. Keep hold of the back of the ear mould until you have completed this step.



3. Now let go of the back of the ear mould and push it into the ear. It may help to pull the ear down and back at the same time.



4. When the ear mould is in place, loop the hearing aid over the top and behind the ear.



### Caring for the hearing aid

- A hearing aid is a precious piece of equipment because it helps your child hear. It needs to be looked after carefully and to be put in a safe place when it is not being used e.g. when your child goes to bed at night.
- The hearing aid has some water resistance but should not be fully submerged for long periods of time so it is generally advisable to take it out of your child's ear for example if your child is swimming or in the bath or shower.
- If your child is taking part in PE at school and their hearing aid might come in contact with anything hard (e.g. if they are doing gymnastics) they may want to take it out to protect their ear and the hearing aid.

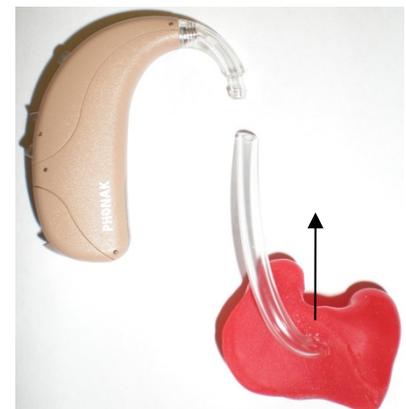
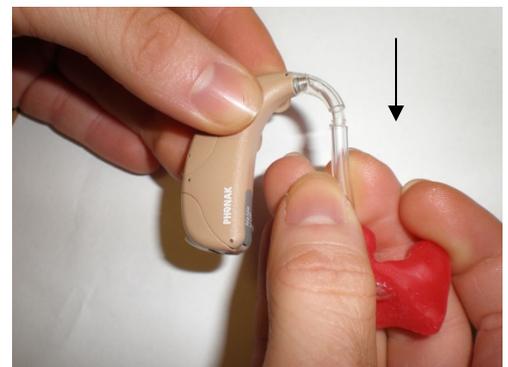
### Cleaning the hearing aid

The ear mould and hearing aid need to be kept clean. You can wipe the ear mould every day with a dry cloth or anti-bacterial wipe (available from the chemist) before putting it in your child's ear.

The ear mould will also need to be washed regularly with soap (the kind you would use on your skin) and water. If your child suffers with frequent ear-infections the ear moulds will need to be soaked in a sterilising solution (e.g. Milton) to prevent the spread of infection.

To wash the ear mould you need to remove it from the hearing aid. To do this hold on to the tubing with one hand and the hearing aid in the other and ease the two bits apart, as shown. You may need to pull it fairly hard but this should not harm the hearing aid.

After you have washed the ear mould there is likely to be some water remaining in the tubing. You can use the 'puffer' in your care pack to blow any water out of the tube before re-connecting the hearing aid.



To re-connect the ear mould and hearing aid match the curve at the back of the ear-mould to the curve of the hearing aid and ease the tubing on to the elbow of the aid, as shown.

Moisture or condensation can build up in the tube. If this happens you can disconnect the ear mould and hearing aid and use the puffer to remove the moisture.

Some people find that they have moisture present in the tubing of the ear mould most of the time; special tubing (known as stay-dry tubing) may be used to prevent this.

Ear wax can also block the tubing of the ear mould causing the sound from the hearing aid to be less clear. A brush which has a hook on one end that can be used to remove any wax can be provided.

### Ear mould tubing

The tubing of the ear mould will need replacing. How often the tubing needs to be changed varies from person to person. The tubing in your child's ear mould may need changing because it has become hard or brittle, because it is completely blocked with ear wax, because it has fallen out of the ear mould or because your child suffers with frequent ear infections (regular changing of ear mould tubing can reduce the spread of infection).

Your audiologist and teacher of the hearing impaired will be able to change the tubing of the ear mould for you. They will also be able to show you how to do it if you would like them to. If this is the case we can provide spare tubing for you to keep at home.

If the tubing frequently falls out of your child's ear mould a tubing lock can be fitted to anchor it in place.

### Drying the hearing aid

Some hearing aids are sensitive to moisture building up from every day use. This could cause them to work well for some of the time but not all of the time (known as being *'intermittent'*). We will provide 'dri-pots' to dry-out the hearing aids to prevent moisture from building up. They need to be used regularly, which could be every night when your child has gone to bed.

The hearing aids and the ear moulds can be placed in the dri-pot but the hearing aid batteries should be removed.

**Please be advised the dri-capsule should not be opened and the capsule/contents should not be swallowed**

### Batteries

Batteries can be collected Monday - Friday from 8.30 – 5pm from Audiology 1 or 2 receptions or at your local GP surgery during their opening hours. You may be asked for a battery card, which should be given to you when your child's hearing aid(s) are fitted and details which batteries they need. Batteries can also be posted to you if you contact the

Audiology department to request them. Teachers of the hearing impaired also carry supplies of batteries with them when they visit your child at home or in school.

**Please remember that batteries are toxic and should not be swallowed. If you suspect your child has swallowed a battery you should seek immediate medical help.**

### Is my hearing aid faulty?

Sometimes a hearing aid becomes faulty or may appear to be faulty. Here is a list of common problems, possible causes and remedies you can try. If you are unable to solve the problem yourself and your child's hearing aid is still not working properly it may need to be sent for repair. Usually there is no charge for the hearing aid to be replaced or repaired providing that you have taken the best care of it.

#### **No sound from the hearing aid:**

- Check that the hearing aid is switched on properly.
- Check that there has been no accidental confusion between new and used batteries and that the battery is in the right way around. If the battery is in correctly and working you should be able to hear a high-pitched whistling sound when the aid is on but out of the ear with the volume (if manually adjustable) on maximum. Cupping your hand over the end of the ear mould can emphasise this whistling.
- The ear mould tubing may be blocked by ear wax. If this is the case you can attempt to remove it using a pin head or brush with the metal hook end. If this is not successful try retubing the ear mould (If we have shown you how to do this and given you spare tubing). If you are not able to retube the hearing aid yourself contact Paediatric Audiology for advice.
- The ear mould tubing may be blocked by condensation. If this is the case a 'puffer' can be provided to dry the tubing.
- The hearing aid may be working intermittently due to moisture. If this is the case, by using the Dri-pot provided in your care kit.
- The hearing aid filters may be blocked. You can replace these if we have shown you how and given you spare filters. If you are not able to do this yourself contact Paediatric Audiology for advice.
- The hearing aid may be damaged or faulty. If you think this is the case contact Paediatric Audiology for advice.

#### **Sound from the hearing aid is not clear/sounds distorted:**

- The ear mould may not be inserted properly. Try reinserting the ear mould using the guide in this booklet.
- The battery may be weak. Try replacing the battery with a new one.

- This may happen if the ear mould is not fitting into the ear well or if the hearing aid is damaged or faulty. If you suspect either of these causes please contact Paediatric Audiology for advice.

### **Sound from the hearing aid is not loud enough:**

- The ear mould may not be inserted properly. Try reinserting the ear mould using the guide in this booklet.
- The ear mould tubing may be blocked by ear wax. If this is the case you can attempt to remove it using a pin head or a brush with a metal hook end. If this is not successful try retubing the ear mould (If we have shown you how to do this and given you spare tubing). If you are not able to retube the hearing aid yourself contact Paediatric Audiology for advice.
- The ear mould tubing may be blocked by condensation. If this is the case a 'puffer' can be provided to dry the tubing.
- The hearing aid filters may be blocked. You can replace these if we have shown you how and given you spare filters. If you are not able to do this yourself contact Paediatric Audiology for advice.
- This may also be due to wax in your child's ears, a change in their ability to detect sounds, because the settings of their hearing aid(s) need adjustment or because their hearing aid is faulty or damaged. If you suspect any of these causes contact Paediatric Audiology for advice.

### **Feedback (whistling) from the hearing aid:**

- The ear mould may not be inserted properly. Try reinserting the ear mould using the guide in this booklet.
- This may also be caused by the ear mould being too loose or if the settings of the hearing aid need adjustment. If you suspect either of these causes please contact Paediatric Audiology for advice.
- There could be wax blocking in your child's ears, if you suspect this then please contact Paediatric Audiology for advice.

### How to contact Paediatric Audiology

The Paediatric Clinical Audiology Office telephone number is **0118 322 7238**.

We endeavour to respond to all messages received within two working days. Please contact us on this telephone number or alternatively email

[audiology.royalberkshire@nhs.net](mailto:audiology.royalberkshire@nhs.net) if:

- You need to contact Paediatric Audiology for advice.
- The remedies above have not helped and you suspect that the hearing aid is damaged or faulty. A replacement hearing aid can be programmed and means of collection arranged. **Unfortunately due to other clinic commitments it is not usually possible to replace a hearing aid if you drop-in without prior notification.**
- The problem occurring is not with the hearing aid itself e.g. if a new ear mould is needed or the hearing aid requires some fine-tuning. If this is the case we can arrange a convenient time to see you and your child to work out the problem.

**For further information about the Trust, visit [www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk](http://www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk)**

**Website: <http://www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk/wards-and-services/audiology.htm>**

If you would like this leaflet in other languages or formats (e.g. large print, Braille or audio), please contact the Audiology Department.

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