



Caring for your Hearing Aids

A BSHAA guide to Behind-the-Ear (BTE) aids



CARE • SUPPORT • ADVOCATE

Behind the Ear (BTE) aids



BSHAA is the professional body that represents good practice in hearing care by its members. This guide is presented to you by one of its members.

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BSHAA gratefully acknowledges the support of hearing aid manufacturers who have supplied photographs of different hearing instruments for use in this guide. Their inclusion in no way reflects either preference or endorsement of any individual manufacturer by BSHAA.

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Introduction

The information provided in this leaflet has been prepared as a reminder to you of what your Audiologist has advised you about cleaning your hearing aids and moulds.

Please check with your Audiologist that you have the correct guide.

After investing in your hearing aids, you will no doubt want to keep them performing to their optimum level and for as long as possible. This cleaning guide will help you keep your aids functioning exactly as they should.

It is **essential** that you have a daily cleaning routine. If you do not do this, the tube (the part which delivers sound into your ear) may become blocked with wax or moisture and the sound will gradually become weaker, affecting performance. In addition the hearing aid itself, if not cleaned regularly, will eventually stop working altogether, requiring repair or even replacement. Wax, debris or moisture blockages are regarded by the manufacturers as your responsibility so they are within their rights to reject any warranty claim for damage caused by this – so even more reason to prevent it.

Your Audiologist will explain what is required to clean your aids when they are fitted. Different models require different cleaning regimes. Make sure you have a go at cleaning the aids yourself while you are with the Audiologist, especially if you are a new user.

At any time, if you have difficulty or need to go over the cleaning regime again, contact your Audiologist and ask for help – they will prefer you to do this rather than have aids that are not performing as they should.

Equipment

To care for your hearing aids effectively you will need:

- Tissues, medi swabs or antibacterial wipes if you prefer
- A small brush* (may have a small metal loop on the other end)
- A wire filament*
- A puffer if your aid has an ear mould
- A drying box (please ask your Audiologist about the different types that may be suitable for you)
- A small pot for soapy water (**to only be used for cleaning the earmould and not the aid itself**), or there are proprietary tablets you can use for cleaning the mould if preferred.

* This equipment will be supplied initially when buying your instruments, **if required**.

If you find handling the small brush, pick or filament too fiddly, or you have problems with dexterity, a device is available that incorporates all the necessary equipment in one pack. It has a large handle for you to grip the required equipment.

Ask your Audiologist for the cost and advice.

Alternatively, a new very soft baby toothbrush could be used.

All equipment usually can be ordered from your Audiologist.

Caring for your BTE aids

BTEs produce the sound in the main body of the aid with a thick plastic tube to guide the sound into the ear and is fitted with an ear mould attached to the aid via an ear hook. If you are unsure about identifying any part of your hearing aid ask your Audiologist to help as this is important to know for correct maintenance of the aid, tubing and ear mould.

At night

- Give the aid a very gentle brush, particularly the holes (on the top or body of your aid, this is where the microphones are and the sound is picked up). This removes any old skin or other debris. Have the aid facing down to stop any debris going back into the holes.

- Check the tubing: make sure there is no wax, debris or moisture present. If there is, then twist and pull detaching the tubing from the ear hook as instructed by the Audiologist. Use the wire filament to pass through the tubing to remove any debris. You may also use the metal loop on the small brush to “pick” any debris from the end of the tube enclosed in the ear mould. Please note: if the tubing is hard, brittle, discoloured or splits it should be replaced by your Audiologist.
- Ear moulds should be removed periodically and washed (not soaked) in warm soapy water and rinsed thoroughly. Make sure that both the tubing and the mould are completely dry before reattaching to the aid via the ear hook.
- Place the aid somewhere warm to dry every night. Should the aid get wet: Place the aid somewhere warm to dry (**remove the battery, except for rechargeable instruments**). If you find it difficult to dry your aid overnight, you can purchase drying boxes which use drying tablets/capsules. There are various types of these and your Audiologist will help you choose the best solution for your needs. If you have rechargeable instruments the recharging unit should be sufficient to dry the aids.
- **Do not place hearing aids on a radiator or in an oven to dry!**

In the morning

- Check that there is no moisture in the tubing or mould. If the aids have been properly dried overnight there should not be any moisture left but if there is, use a puffer to blow the moisture out of the tubing.

General maintenance

- Should include a check on tubing, if it becomes hard, discoloured or split it should be replaced by your Audiologist.

You can find out more about BSHAA – and access lots of information about hearing care – at www.bshaa.com