

Maintaining Your Child's Hearing Aids

KEEPING THE HEARING AID IN GOOD WORKING ORDER

Besides keeping the aid on, it's important to keep it in top shape. It must be working well to do its job. Many parents have found doing a daily maintenance check (it goes quickly once you've done it a few times) assures that the child is getting the most out of his aid. It's a good idea to follow a routine each evening, with a quick double-check the next morning to be sure the batteries haven't lost power overnight. Begin by getting together a maintenance kit. You might keep the following things together in a box - a shoe box is a convenient size.

A package of pipe cleaners to clean and dry earmolds.

A dozen or so **toothpicks** to remove any wax clogging the earmold. (Note: Never try to remove wax from your child's ear. Leave that to the doctor.)

An eraser on the end of a pencil. (The eraser end can be used to clean battery contacts.)

Spare batteries. (Store in a cool, dry place - not a refrigerator.)

A Daily Hearing Aid Check

Here's a routine to follow in a quick daily check of your child's hearing aid.

At night:

1. Be sure the aid is turned off.
2. Check the earmold. See whether it's clogged with earwax. If it is, use a **toothpick** to get it out.
3. If the earmold can be detached, wash it in lukewarm water and a mild detergent. **Never** use alcohol or any cleaning compound on the plastic earmold. Dry with a soft cloth and a **pipe cleaner**. Blow through the opening to speed up the drying. Let dry overnight.

In the morning:

1. Be sure the volume is off, and that the M-T switch is set at **M**. (**M** is for microphone and the switch should always be on **M** for your child. The **T** is for telephone. Adults and older children switch to **T** when they are able to use a telephone.)
2. Be sure the tone setting is as it was preset by the audiologist. **Never change this.**
3. Then attach the aid to the listening stethoscope or earmold (your own or your child's) Turn it - and the volume - on, and LISTEN. Whisper a few words (include "s" or "sh" sounds, as they are hard to hear.) If the sound seems weak, replace the battery. (You can test it later with a battery tester if you have one.) Be sure the sound is as clear as usual.

Once a week:

1. Turn the aid on and off several times. This lets you determine whether the "on and off" switch is working. Also. It cleans dirty contacts in the aid. Use the **eraser** to rub battery contacts to be sure they are clean.
2. Gradually turn the volume up and down. Listen for any scratchy sounds or dead spots - spots where there is no sound. If there are any, change the battery. If this doesn't eliminate the problem, take the hearing aid in for service.

The list of things to check may seem overwhelming - it actually takes almost less time to check the aid than to read the list! A procedure like this can assure that your child will be on the receiving end of sound when each day begins.