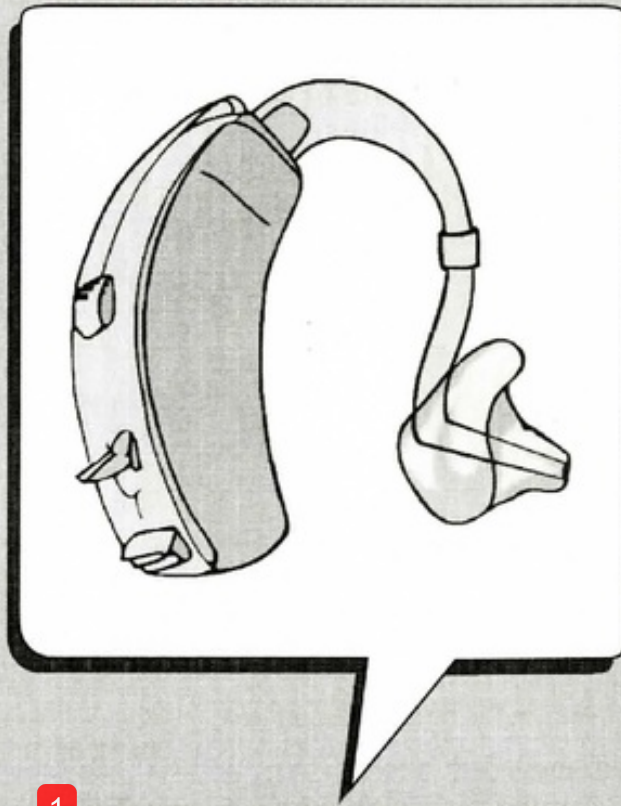


Use and Care of Behind the Ear Hearing Aids

by Audiology 30

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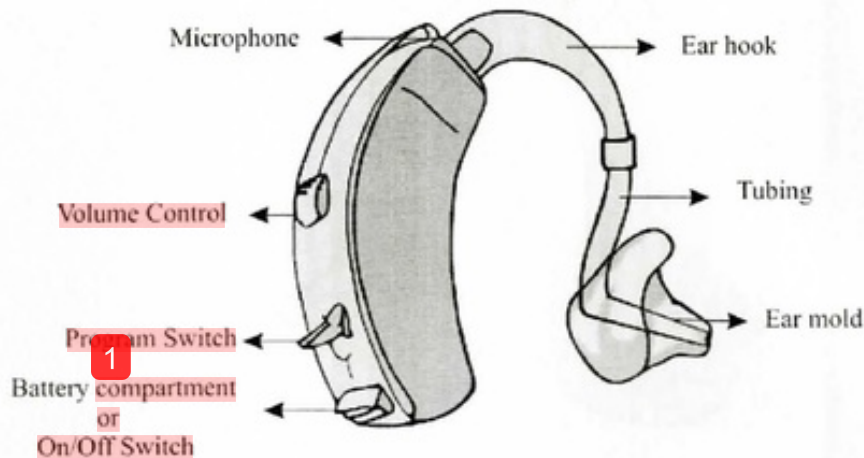
USE AND CARE OF BEHIND-THE-EAR HEARING AIDS



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USE AND CARE OF BEHIND-THE-EAR HEARING AIDS

Behind The Ear (BTE) hearing aids are a type of ear-level hearing aids that consist of a microphone, an amplifier and a receiver. All these parts are incorporated in a small plastic case that is worn behind the ear. The BTE hearing aid has many parts, as depicted in the following figure:



On/Off Switch

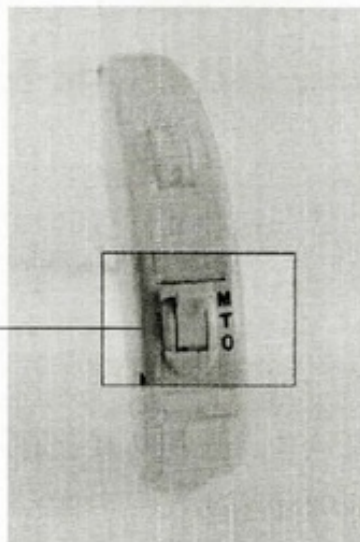
There are usually three markings on this switch:

O: Off

M: For ordinary listening

T: To be used when the hearing aid is being used with a telephone

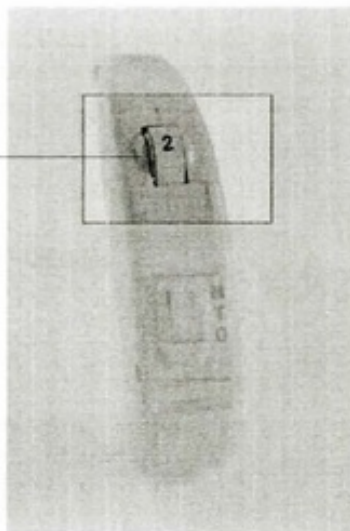
On/Off Switch



1 The On/Off switch is used to turn the hearing aid on, set it on 'T' mode, or to turn the hearing aid off. This helps in preventing battery drainage when the hearing aid is not in use. In some hearing aids, the battery compartment itself acts as an On/Off switch.

Volume Control

Volume control ←



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This control increases or decreases the level of sound output from the hearing aid. Find out from your audiologist whether the volume control for your hearing aid has been enabled or disabled. If it has been enabled, then use this switch/dial to set the volume at the level recommended by the audiologist. As the battery gets weaker, you might have to increase the volume setting. But do not increase it beyond 2/3rd of the total volume range. Doing so will result in distorted sound. Numbers are marked on the volume dial. Higher the number, louder will be the sound.

Tone Control

Some hearing aids give the wearer the option of reducing the amplification at certain frequencies. This control is used when the listener needs only certain aspects of sound to be reduced as he/she may have better hearing in those frequencies. The tone control provides three options for amplification:

N: Normal

H: Low frequencies are reduced

L: High frequencies are reduced

For example, if a person has better hearing in the low frequencies, he/she may be advised to use the hearing aid on 'H' setting. You must set the tone control only to the position prescribed by your audiologist.

'H' position may also be used in certain noisy situations, in order to perceive the speech better.

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Program Switch

Find out from your audiologist whether programs in your hearing aid have been enabled or not. If yes, your audiologist would have programmed your hearing aid so that you can use different programs for different listening situations, i.e., listening in quiet, listening in noise, etc. Find out from your audiologist what program is to be used when. Use the program switch to change from one program to another. You may hear a beep or a tone when you change the program.

Batteries

BTE hearing aids use button batteries. These are small, round and flat, as shown in the figure below. However, they are available in different sizes, so make sure you use the battery that is suitable for your hearing aid.



- 1 Do not leave batteries in the battery compartment when the hearing aid is not in use, as they may discharge and damage parts of the hearing aid.
- Do not store old batteries, as it may cause fresh and used batteries to be mixed up.
- Purchase fresh batteries from shops or from authorized hearing aid dealers where the stocks are fresh.
- Always have spare batteries available, to ensure uninterrupted use of the hearing aid.
- Store batteries in a cool and dry place: away from coins, pins and other metal objects.
- Keep batteries away from children and pets.
- Dispose off the used batteries properly.

1 Battery compartment



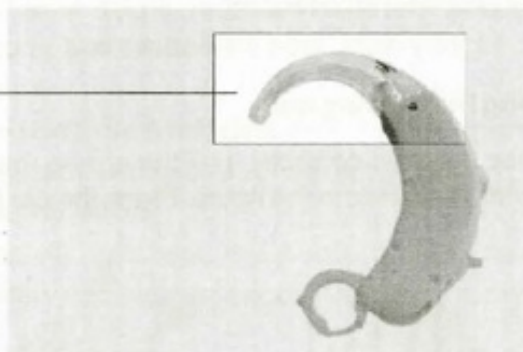
While inserting the battery into the battery compartment, check that the positive end of the battery (marked with +) is in contact with the positive end of the battery compartment (also marked with +), and the negative end of the battery (-) is in contact with the negative end of the battery compartment (-).

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Ear Hook

The ear hook is made of rigid plastic, and serves to anchor the hearing aid firmly to the external ear / pinna. It also acts as a channel for sound waves to pass through. This is connected to the earmold tubing.

Ear hook



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Tubing



The tube which connects the ear mold to the ear hook is made of soft, pliable polymer or silicone. With the passing of time, most tubes harden and become brittle.

- Once the tubing gets discoloured or becomes brittle, replace it with new tubing.
- Keep the tubing clean and dry.
- Avoid twisting, kinking or pinching the tubing, as it may obstruct the passage of sound.

Ear mold



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An earmold is generally made of acrylic or silicone material, and is custom-made to fit snugly into the ear. A separate earmold is made for each ear, and these molds cannot be interchanged. It is important that the earmold should fit well, otherwise it would not only be uncomfortable, but would also cause an unpleasant squeal.

For proper conduction of sound, the earmold should be clean and free of any obstructions. It should not be clogged with wax, dust, etc. Therefore, it is necessary to clean the earmold regularly.

- First, detach the earmold from the hearing aid.
- Use a pipe cleaner or wire-pick to clear out any wax that may be blocking the passage.
- Clean the earmold every 3-4 days with warm soap water and dry the earmolds thoroughly.
- Every night, wipe the eartip clean.

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Wearing the hearing aid:

To place earmold correctly, pull the ear up and back. Then insert earmold into the canal, as shown in the figure. Place the ear hook behind the upper part of the



ear pinna, and gently twist the ear forward and downward, so that the hearing aid slips on behind the ear. Do not pull the hearing aid/earmold out by pulling/holding the tubing.

Guarding your hearing aid

- A hearing aid is an expensive piece of equipment, and should be guarded against loss. Children often lose their hearing aids during play, or pull them off. To avoid this, you may use hearing aid huggies. Huggies are plastic rings to keep BTEs on a child's ear. These are ideal for children who have trouble wearing hearing aids



- To guard the hearing aid against sweat and dirt, use a hearing aid sweat band. This will absorb any sweat, thereby protecting the hearing aid. This is especially useful for athletes who use hearing aids.
- Latex balloon-like covers are available, and can be used to protect the hearing aid.

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Care and maintenance:

- Wipe the hearing aid and earmold using a soft cotton cloth after everyday's use.
- Switch your hearing aid off when it is not in use and take the batteries out and keep the battery compartment open
- Keep your hearing aid dry
- Avoid exposing the hearing aid to heat and dust
- Do not immerse the hearing aid in water or wear it in heavy rain.
- Do not bathe with your hearing aid on
- If the hearing aid accidentally gets wet, dry it with a cloth, remove batteries and keep the battery compartment open. Do not try to dry it by micro waving or heating it.
- If you have a discharging ear, do not use the hearing aid in that ear. Consult a doctor immediately
- Clean your earmolds every 3-4 days
- Use lukewarm water and soap to clear out any wax or debris in the earmold
- Do not drop, bang or jam the hearing aid against hard surfaces
- Keep the hearing aid away from children and pets
- Do not expose the hearing aid to X-rays. Do not place it near heaters, stoves, television, radio sets, window sills, etc
- Purchase a dehumidifier to keep the hearing aid dry. If you're prone to heavy sweating, consider wearing a hearing aid sweatband.
- Do not scrub your hearing aid. Use a soft, dry cloth and gently wipe the hearing aid dry.
- Consider using wax guards to protect your hearing aid from excessive wax accumulation
- Avoid using hair care products like hair spray, oil, and mousse once the hearing aid is in place. These substances may clog the microphone and obstruct sound passage
- Children who use hearing aids often lose their hearing aids or pull them off. In such case, you can use 'huggies'.
- Service your hearing aid periodically
- Visit your audiologist regularly

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If you have any questions/comments, or need any help, feel free to contact us:

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