**HEARING AID BASICS**

**The following information is to help get you started in using and caring for your new hearing instrument(s).**

**For more information regarding your specific device, please refer to the manufacturer’s manual.**

DAILY USE

* **Frequency of use:** The more your wear your hearing aids, the faster you will become used to them. Try wearing them at least a few hours on the first day. Double the hours of use each day until you are wearing them ‘full-time’ during all waking hours with the exception of water activities (e.g. swimming, bathing). When not using the hearing aids, place them in a hard case for safe storage (not in your pocket!). Keep them away from excessive heat and moisture and away from pets / young children.
* **Insertion and removal:** It takes practice to be able to insert and remove your new hearing aids. If you use hearing aids in each ear, the instruments will be marked as follows: **RIGHT EAR = RED LEFT EAR = BLUE**
* **On / off:**  in most devices, the battery door acts as the on/off switch: closed is ‘on’ while open is ‘off’. Some devices

have a push button to turn the device on and off (e.g. rechargeable hearing aids)

* **Retention:** For active hearing aid users and children, retention devices (e.g. clips or 2-sided tape) may be helpful in keeping the instruments in place.
* **Comfort:** Make sure your hearing aids feel comfortable in your ears. Let us know right away if any sore spots develop.
* **Programs:** Some hearing aids have multiple programs for different listening environments. Some devices change programs automatically while others are selected by the user. Give yourself time to get used to the hearing aids and the controls. Today, your programs include the following:

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* **Telephone:** You should be able to use your hearing aid with the telephone without excessive acoustic feedback. There are various techniques and devices to help with telephone reception. Ask your audiologist or hearing instrument specialist what strategy is most effective with your hearing aid.

DAILY CARE

* **Battery care: Batteries are toxic if swallowed! Keep batteries out of the reach of children and pets!** Battery life varies based on size, your degree of hearing loss, and hours of device use. An increase in battery consumption occurs when the hearing aids are coupled to assistive technology or Bluetooth devices. To help maximize battery life, remember to turn the hearing aids off when not in use by opening the battery door or by pushing the button if using rechargeable hearing aids. Your battery size is:
* Rechargeable
* Rechargeable 312
* 10 / yellow
* 312 / brown
* 13 / orange
* 675 / blue
* **Cleaning / Care:** Help to maintain yourhearing aids by carefully:
	+ Wiping the external components with a dry tissue / cloth.
	+ Inspecting mic ports and clearing debris with provided tool-brush or mic covers as needed.
	+ Removing wax / debris from vent and sound bore.
		- For in-the-ear/canal hearing aids or those with receivers in the canal (RIC), change wax guard as needed
		- For behind-the-ear hearing aids that use earmolds, you may remove the earmold and wash it with soap and water. **Do not wash the hearing aid!** The earmold must be completely dry before re-attaching it to the hearing aid.
		- For behind-the-ear hearing aids that use slim tubes, remove any visible wax from the dome or replace. If the debris is visible inside the slim tube, then remove the slim tube from the hearing aid and slide the flexi-tool through. For stubborn debris, replace the slim tube as needed.
	+ At night, store your device in a dri-aid kit or charging case, which may have a built in drying element. Check / replace your dri-kit capsule if you suspect that it may no longer be providing effective moisture management (e.g. corrosion in battery compartment, decreased performance in device function).
		- For longer term storage (e.g. an older instrument being kept as a spare), remove the battery and store away from excessive heat and moisture.

OTHER:

* **Adjusting to sounds with new hearing aid use:** When first wearing your new hearing aid(s), your own voice, other voices and sounds may appear different to you. Depending upon your unique profile (e.g. degree, configuration and duration of hearing loss), this adjustment period will vary but with consistent use, this difference will be less noticeable.
* **Feedback:** Acoustic feedback occurs when amplified sound enters the mic of the same system. This can easily occur in hearing aids given the little distance between the mic and the sound bore. Feedback may occur during insertion and removal of the hearing instrument, when something is too close to the hearing aid (e.g. hand cupped over the ear, hugging), or when the volume on the hearing aid is set too high. Abnormal feedback can occur with jaw or head movements or with no movement at all. Excessive ear wax can also lead to feedback. Please let us know if abnormal feedback is occurring.
* **Warranty:** New hearing aids come with warranties for repair as well as for loss & damage. Please read your dispensing information for coverage guidelines and expiration dates. Extended warranties may be purchased before the original warranty expires. Contact our Hearing Instrument Specialist (HIS) team should your hearing aid need repair / replacement.

ADJUSTING TO YOUR HEARING LOSS:

* **Expectations:** Remember, hearing aids do not restore hearing to normal nor do they prevent further hearing loss. Strategies to aid in communication access remain important including reductions in background noise and reverberation levels whenever possible. If there remain specific settings that continue to be challenging for you to hear, your audiologist / hearing instrument specialist may suggest assistive technology in addition to your hearing aids.
* **Reactions from friends / family / others:** You may be surprised at the number of questions or comments individuals may share with you that reflect their own experiences with hearing loss. Because hearing loss is unique to the individual, some of these comments may be helpful and some may not.
* **Support groups:** You may have specific feelings of “loss” related to your own hearing loss or that of a loved one’s. There are resources available that can help you to navigate these feelings. There are several excellent on-line resources related to hearing loss as well as some support groups depending upon region. Connecting with others can be very empowering. If a group setting is not your preference, consider individual support through a counselor (preferably one with experience in hearing loss and/or grief counseling).

**Congratulations on your new hearing instrument(s)!**

During the trial period, keep a list of any questions or concerns that may arise and bring them to the in-trial check appointment. For urgent concerns that cannot wait (e.g. excessive soreness, does not appear to be working), please call

**603.650.4897**

to speak with one of the Hearing Instrument Specialists.