



Repairing Your Hearing Aids

What causes hearing aids to break down and need repaired?

We need to remember that hearing aids are an electronic device. Moisture is very bad for electronics. The ear is a warm moist place. It is amazing that hearing aids work and last as long as they do. Recent developments in nano coating has helped tremendously with keeping moisture out of the electronics of hearing aids.

Most people wear their hearing aids 12 to 16 hours per day. That equates to 4,320 - 5,760 hours a year. At some point the small components of the aid is going to wear out just like parts in a car. It is pretty normal to have to have a hearing aid repaired within three to five years or sooner if it is not kept clean and repaired when needed.

Start with clean ears

Before inserting your hearing aids the ears should be free from wax. You should strive to keep your ears and hearing aids as clean as possible.

Earwax obstruction

Ninty-five percent of hearing aid malfunctions is wax, dry skin, sweat or skin oil in the receiver of the hearing aid. Make sure your hearing aid has some kind of wax guard, wax spring, adhesive strip or trap door.

Responsibility for wax maintenance

It is not the responsibility of the audiologist or dispenser to keep your hearing aids clean. It is your responsibility to develop a daily habit of cleaning and inspecting your aids for wax.

When and how to remove wax

When you see wax wipe it off with a tissue or use your wax loop to pull the wax out. Do not poke anything but a wax loop into the receiver of a hearing aid. Hold the aid upside down and gently brush the wax out. If you are unable to get the wax out call your audiologist or dispenser and have them suction the wax out. If the wax is imbedded into the receiver it may need to be replaced.

Moisture from inside the ear

Moisture from the ear canal varies from person to person, activity level and climatic conditions. Vapors from the ear canal can run up the tubing of a BTE (Behind The Ear) and the receiver of an ITE (In The Ear). A tiny moisture bubble in a tube of a BTE can instantly shut off the sound. Moisture is not good for the internal electronic parts of a hearing aid!

Moisture from outside the ear

Getting the aid wet from: rain, shower, swimming, fishing - immediately wipe the aid off, remove the battery and let it dry out for 24 hours. Say a prayer and hope it works the next day. Sweat especially for BTE wearers. Beads of sweat accumulate in the hairline along the top of the hearing aid. This moisture can seep into the cracks along the surface of the hearing aid and eventually effect operation.

Preventing moisture

Wear a hat or scarf when it rains to protect the aids. Continuously wipe the aids off if it is humid or if you are perspiring. BTE ear molds - use a bulb syringe and blow out moisture anytime you notice it. Use a hearing aid dehumidifier at night when the aids are not in your ears.

Oily skin

Oils from the skin can seep into the small cracks of hearing aids just like moisture. Oils from our fingertips can get on the battery and from there get onto the battery contacts causing intermittence - your audiologist or dispenser can clean the battery contacts for you. Wash your hands before handling your hearing aids!

Dirty Volume Control

Dirt and oil from our fingertips can get into the cracks around the volume control and cause the wheels, toggles and push buttons to get stiff or sound to be intermittent.

Dirty Microphone

Dirt and oil from your fingertips can plug the microphone of your hearing aid cutting off the sound. Brush the microphone gently with your brush.

Always wash or have clean hands before handling your hearing aids!

General hearing aid repair costs: If the aid is in warranty it should not cost anything to repair - out of warranty - \$275-\$350 including a 6-month or 1-year warranty.

Nursing the aid along: If your hearing aid is more than 5 years old and it is in for repair often... It is time to get a new one.

- Hearing aids are worn for many hours each day, which places stress on electrical components and battery power.
- Your ear has corrosive properties like moisture, warm temperatures, earwax, skin acids and oil.
- No matter how well the hearing aid is made or how well you take care of it, sooner or later it will stop working.

Remember - hearing aids are a tiny delicate instrument, which should be treated with care. If kept clean and safe they will serve you well.