

Troubleshooting Tips for Hearing Aids



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HEARING HELP: Some hearing aid problems can be resolved with troubleshooting skills. See your audiologist if difficulties persist.

Hearing aids provide help to many people that would otherwise have very poor communication capabilities. Both new and experienced hearing aid users can run into problems, but a few simple troubleshooting skills often can solve minor difficulties.

My hearing aid is not working!

When a hearing aid is not operating, it may be the result of several factors. Sometimes, it may be a combination of factors.^{1,2} Here are

some tips that may resolve the problem:

- 1** Be sure the aid is switched to the “on” position.
- 2** If equipped with a telephone switch (“T” switch), be sure that the switch is in the microphone (“M”) position for general hearing.
- 3** Check to ensure that the hearing aid has a battery and that the battery is inserted correctly (“+” sign on battery matches “+” sign in battery compartment).
- 4** Make sure that the battery is operating correctly.
- 5** Make sure that the battery does not have a film (i.e. body oil) or corrosion preventing electrical conduction.
- 6** Make sure that the battery terminals in the hearing aid do not appear to be corroded (which will require repair by an audiologist).
- 7** Make sure that the earmold is not blocked, preventing sound from entering the ear.
- 8** If the aid is equipped with an on-off switch, make sure the switch is making electrical contact. The on-off switch may need to be replaced.
- 9** If there is a tube between the hearing aid and earmold, make sure it is not blocked by water, perspiration, earwax, a bend or a crack.

My hearing aid is uncomfortable!

Discomfort may be caused by physical irritation, psychological perception, or a combination of these factors.^{1,2}

1 Physical discomfort: For new hearing aid users, an audiologist will tell you when and for how long you need to wear hearing aids during the adjustment period. For experienced hearing aid users, an audiologist should be contacted when physical discomfort interferes with hearing aid use.

2 Psychological discomfort or annoyance:

a. **“My voice sounds too loud.”** When an ear is blocked with a hearing aid, what a person hears sounds differently than it did before the hearing aid was used. With effective guidance and hearing aid adjustments from an audiologist, most people learn to adapt to their voice.

b. **“My hearing aid ‘whistles.’”** Look for and remove wax or other obstructions that may be blocking the output of the hearing aid.

If your hearing aid has a telephone switch, be sure to use it when talking on the phone. If it does not have a telephone switch, hold the telephone near the hearing aid but not touching the hearing aid.

c. **“I hear a lot of background noise like birds, trucks or paper rattling, and not what I want to hear.”** Practice and patience with guidance from an audiologist is likely the best solution to this problem.

In summary, hearing aids provide critically needed help for people with hearing loss. However, hearing aids are electronic/mechanical devices that must be adjusted, repaired and replaced when needed.

REFERENCES

1. American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) at www.asha.org/default.htm
2. National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders at www.nidcd.nih.gov

