

The Do's & Don'ts

- ✓ **Do** wear your hearing aids on a regular basis
- ✓ **Do** be patient. It takes time to adjust to using hearing aids
- ✓ **Do** clean your hearing aids and earmolds regularly
- ✓ **Do** keep your hearing aids away from pets and children
- ✓ **Do** discuss hearing aid problems with your audiologist
- ∅ **Don't** give up learning to use your hearing aids
- ∅ **Don't** get your hearing aids wet
- ∅ **Don't** put your hearing aid in the microwave or oven
- ∅ **Don't** leave your hearing aids in the hot sun

Hearing aids **DO** help you hear better in most situations

Hearing aids **DO** help you to participate in more group situations and meetings

But Remember

- ∅ Hearing aids **DON'T** restore your hearing to normal
- ∅ Hearing aids **DON'T** remove background noise
- ∅ Hearing aids **DON'T** protect your ears from loud sounds so **DO** wear ear plugs or earmuffs to protect your hearing

Other Resources

Hearing Loss Association of America
www.hearingloss.org

Better Hearing Institute
www.betterhearing.org

American Academy of Audiology
www.audiology.org

American Speech Hearing Language Association
www.asha.org/public/

National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders
www.nidcd.nih.gov/health/hearing

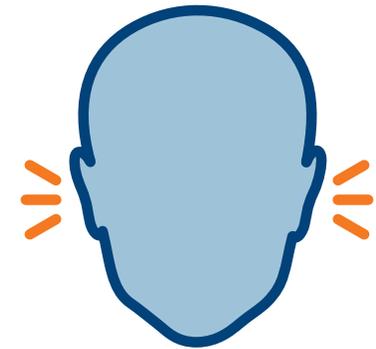
National Center for
Rehabilitative Auditory Research (NCRAR)
VA Portland Health Care System
3710 SW US Veterans Hospital Road
Portland, Oregon 97239
503-220-8262, ext. 54525
www.ncrar.research.va.gov

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Hearing Aids: The Basics

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Styles of Hearing Aids

Open Fit Behind-the-Ear (BTE).

Open fit BTEs are now the most common style of hearing aid. They are lightweight and small. They have clear ultrathin tubing with a soft tip that holds the device in your ear. The soft tip does not block your ear canal. This has the advantage of keeping your ear from feeling blocked, but it also means that these hearing aids are not suitable for more severe hearing loss.

In-the-Ear (ITE). ITE hearing aids come in a half shell or full shell size. The half shell takes up about one half of your *concha* (the bowl-like shape of the outer part of your ear), while the full shell fills up your concha. They are made specially to fit your ear shape. ITEs are one of the easier styles of hearing aids to handle and see, and they are suitable for mild to moderate hearing loss.

In-the-Canal (ITC). ITC hearing aids are smaller than ITE hearing aids and so are still barely visible. They take up one quarter of your *concha* and again are made to fit your ear. However, because they are small, they are harder to handle and see than ITE hearing aids.

Completely-in-the-Canal (CIC). The CIC is the smallest style of hearing aid. It fits deep inside your ear and is

almost invisible to others, but they are harder to handle than ITEs and ITCs and are not suitable for severe hearing loss. Again, they are custom-made to fit your ear.

Behind-the-Ear (BTE). BTE hearing aids fit snugly behind your ear. They are held in place by a plastic earmold made to the shape of your ear, that also channels the sound into your ear. BTEs are suited to most types and degrees of hearing loss, and they can be connected to external sound sources such as televisions or telephones.

Parts of a Hearing Aid

Microphones: pick up sounds, and amplify them (make them louder). The opening of the microphone must be kept clean so that sounds can be picked up.

Sound bore: After the hearing aid has amplified and processed the sound, the sound passes through the sound bore into your ear canal.

Volume control: allows you to change the loudness of the sound. Many hearing aids don't need a volume control button because they automatically adjust the volume, or can be adjusted using a remote control.

Memory button: Some hearing aids can store different settings for listening to music, being in noisy places, or using the telephone. You can switch between settings as needed.

Battery compartment: a small hinged door where the battery goes.

Batteries: Hearing aids need power to work. They use a small battery that comes in one of four sizes. In general, smaller hearing aids use smaller batteries. Think about this when choosing a hearing aid, especially if you have poor eye sight or problems handling small objects.

Air vent: is a tunnel the length of the hearing aid that allows air into your ear canal. It helps stop or reduce feelings of being "plugged up." Open fit BTEs do not need an air vent.

