



CONVENTIONAL HEARING AIDS

Behind The Ear Hearing Aids

Behind-the-Ear (BTE) hearing aids are worn behind the ear and are connected to an earmold that fits in the ear by a small piece of plastic tubing. Sound from the aid travels through the earmold into the ear.

The microphone is at the top of the hearing aid and the battery, amplifier and receiver are all inside the plastic case.

Advantages:

- BTE Aids are suitable for any age and any degree of hearing loss.
- Unobtrusive because of their small size and placement.
- Microphone situated at ear level simulates natural sound reception.
- Can be adjusted for different levels of hearing loss.

Disadvantages:

- Incorrectly fitting or damaged earmolds can result in a whistle (acoustic feedback) and so they need to be remade regularly.

In The Ear Hearing Aids

In The Ear hearing aids are so called because they fit completely in the outer ear. The hard plastic case contains all of the working parts of the aid.

Advantages:

- Attractive because of their small size.
- Microphone situated at ear level simulates natural sound reception.

Disadvantages:

- Not usually recommended for children due to problems keeping a good fit in a growing ear and also for safety reasons.
- Higher chance of whistling (acoustic feedback) because of the closeness of the microphone and receiver.
- Controls and battery compartment can be difficult due to small size.
- The aids are easily damaged by earwax and ear drainage.

In The Canal Hearing Aids

In The Canal Aids are similar to In The Ear Aids except that they are smaller and fit almost completely in the ear canal. A Completely In The Canal Aid is also available which fits entirely in the ear canal.

Advantages:

Attractive because of their small size.

Microphone situated at ear level simulates natural sound reception.

Disadvantages:

Not usually recommended for children due to problems keeping a good fit in a growing ear and also for safety reasons.

Higher chance of whistling (acoustic feedback) because of the closeness of the microphone and receiver.

Controls and battery compartment can be difficult due to small size.

The aids are easily damaged by earwax and ear drainage.

Body Worn Hearing Aids

Body Worn Aids are attached to a belt, pocket or worn in a harness. The microphone is located on the top, front or side of the aid and a lead connects the aid to a receiver which is attached to an earmold or to a vibrator.

Advantages:

Used where powerful amplification is required and especially when a good acoustic seal is needed and feedback is a problem.

Useful when there is difficulty keeping an aid on the head or where there is difficulty with small controls.

Disadvantages:

Microphone not at ear level so does not provide natural sound reception.

Problems if worn under clothing due to rubbing the microphone.

If an aid is worn on the chest it is vulnerable to damage by food or liquid spillages.

Less attractive and cumbersome due to size and lead(s).

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