

Hearing Aid Care

Hearing aids can be quite temperamental little things, screeching, for what seems like, no reason. Follow these next few tips and you might find that they start behaving themselves again.

Reasons for whistling hearing aids:

1. *Build-up of ear wax in the ear.* Some warm olive oil on cotton wool should help wax to seep out but your own GP can syringe your ears if needed too.
2. *Tubing on behind-the-ear hearing aids needs to be changed.* Tubing should be changed every six months or as soon as the tubing becomes hard.
3. *Ear moulds are not fitted properly.* Make sure they are snug in the ear. If any air is allowed to get in they will whistle.
4. *The volume may be up too high.* A hearing aid review might be required. The volume may be turned up because your hearing quality has deteriorated.

Building confidence

- It's ok to get the message wrong
- When I don't get the message, I ask people to repeat it or say it another way
- I tell people I have a hearing loss
- When it's impossible to hear names, numbers and other information, I can ask the speaker to write it down for me
- I feel free to disagree with what others say or do
- I can say NO and not feel guilty
- I feel comfortable wearing my hearing aids in public
- If someone shouts at me, I ask them politely to speak normally
- When the music is too loud in the restaurant or pub, I ask someone to turn it down
- When I go out for a meal, I ask for a quiet place in the restaurant
- I don't apologise for asking others to help me at times

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Information for the Hard of Hearing

Cork Deaf Association

Hard of Hearing

Being hard of hearing can lead to a very socially isolating existence. Those who have a hearing loss can 'give up' on participating in conversations because it is too frustrating and exhausting to keep up with what is being said and having to say 'sorry, what did you say?' or 'what?' multiple times.

It can be frustrating for family members and friends too as they may feel that their thoughts and opinions are undervalued and 'unheard' by the person with the hearing loss. It can be a very emotionally destructive situation.

Consequences of hearing loss:

Breakdown in Communication

Embarrassment or Anxiety

Withdrawal

Diminished Self-Esteem

Social Isolation

Grieving for loss

Depression

Hearing loss affects the ability to communicate effectively. This can then affect a person:

Emotionally

Socially

Psychologically

Occupationally

Environmentally

Educationally

It is **IMPORTANT** to **TAKE CONTROL** of your situation as a person with a hearing loss. There are many things *you* can do to improve your quality of life.

- **Education**

Build your confidence by learning about your type of hearing loss. *Knowledge is power* and acquiring information about your loss, entitlements and amplification devices will make you feel more confident.

- **Technology**

Familiarise yourself with all the listening and amplification devices that are available. These can make a huge difference to your life. There are portable doorbells, smoke alarms, telephones and assistive listening devices available. Please contact the Cork Deaf Association for further details or to arrange a demonstration.

- **Communication Therapy**

Learn to manage your environment by selecting areas/rooms which best suit your listening and communication needs. Conditions like light, noise and furnishings can be changed which can greatly improve your hearing ability. If you would like to have a one-to-one session to discuss how best to adapt to your hearing loss then please contact the Cork Deaf Association to make an appointment.

There are also information pamphlets available from the office in MacCurtain Street. Titles include:

Adjusting to Hearing Aids

Hearing and Hearing Loss

Communication Tips for the Hard of Hearing and their Family and Friends

- **Peer Group Support/Counsellor Support**

A problem shared is a problem halved may sound like a cliché but it is true. Talking to people who are experiencing similar issues can be extremely therapeutic. The Cork Deaf Association has a Hard of Hearing Support Group and new members are always welcome. *Remember:* it is important to continue to meet people and to socialise.

- **Inform People**

'I am hard of hearing so can you please face me when you are speaking to me' should become a mantra to you. Be brave and tell people that you have a hearing loss and you will find that your confidence will grow as a result. Don't apologise for your loss.

- **Be Patient With Yourself**

Getting used to hearing loss takes time and people adjust to wearing hearing aids at different rates. Take things slowly and don't expect to adapt to the loss overnight.