

Patient information factsheet

Tips for keeping hearing aids on babies (aged 0 to 12 months)

We have given you this factsheet because your baby has hearing aids. We understand it can be a challenge to keep hearing aids on babies, especially as they begin to explore more with their hands.

This factsheet contains information about the different hearing aid stages babies (aged 0 to 12 months) go through and some helpful tips on how to keep your baby's hearing aids on. We hope it helps to answer some of the questions you may have. If you have any further questions or concerns, please contact us using the details at the end of this factsheet.

Storing your baby's hearing aids

When your baby is not wearing their hearing aids, you should:

- store the hearing aids safely in a box in a place where you can always find them (for example, in your baby's change bag or by their baby monitor)
- keep the hearing aids out of reach of young children and pets

0 to 3 months

During this age range, babies do not actively explore with their hands. This means that if your baby knocks their hearing aids out, this will be by accident.

Your baby can safely wear their hearing aids all day (even during naps).

Your baby does not need to wear their hearing aids at night, but it is fine if they fall asleep with them in. Please note that if your baby does sleep with their hearing aids in, moisture can build up inside the tubing of the hearing aid. This can block sound from getting through the hearing aid. If this happens, we advise using a hearing aid puffer (a small, squeezable bulb with a nozzle that is designed to blow air through hearing aid tubing to remove moisture, condensation, and earwax), if you have one, to remove the moisture. If you have a puffer, we will show you how to use this. If you have any problems removing the moisture, please contact us for advice.

4 to 6 months

During this age range, your baby may start to turn in the direction of where sounds come from (for example, they may look for your voice when you enter the room).

At about 4 months old, babies typically begin to pick up objects and put them in their mouths. Unless your baby's hearing aids are rechargeable, it is important that their hearing aids have a tamper-proof battery drawer (a specially designed drawer that locks the batteries inside it). This is because **batteries are poisonous if swallowed**.

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All hearing aids that we offer to babies have tamper-proof battery drawers as standard. However, when changing the battery, it is important that you keep the hearing aid and any used or spare batteries out of reach of young children and pets.

If your baby swallows a hearing aid battery, go to your nearest emergency department or call 999 for an ambulance immediately.

You may find using a hearing aid retention clip useful. This clip is designed to attach your baby's hearing aids to the back of their top so that the hearing aids don't get lost if they are accidentally knocked out of their ears. If you think these clips could be helpful for your baby, please speak to your baby's audiologist.

About 6 months

At this age, babies will usually start to discover their hands and feet.

Your baby may use their hands to swipe against or investigate their ears. This may cause your baby to accidentally knock out their hearing aids or dislodge them from their correct positions.

To prevent your baby from easily knocking their hearing aids out, we recommend:

- making sure their earmoulds (part of the hearing aid which sits inside the ear) are tightly fitted (your baby's earmoulds are custom-made so should fit snugly inside their ears)
- using toupee or wig tape (skin-safe double-sided sticky tape) behind their ears to keep their hearing aids securely in place (if you would like to try using this tape, please ask your baby's audiologist who can provide you with this)

About 9 months

At this age, babies typically enjoy their new ability to yank, pull, grab and push. You may find that your baby starts to grab their hat off their head or pull their socks or bib off. They may also start to pull out their hearing aids. If this happens, we recommend that you:

- smile and calmly say 'Hearing aids on. Now you can hear me again.'
- distract them with a game (for example, peek-a-boo)

The pulling out of hearing aids can get very repetitive and frustrating for parents and carers. Remember that your baby is not doing this because there is something wrong with the hearing aids, they are just exploring their body and surroundings and practising their 'taking off' skill. When this happens, try not to respond by telling your baby off (for example, 'no no' or 'uh oh') because they are not being naughty.

About 12 months

At this age, it is normal for your baby to go through a stage of removing their hearing aids.

If your baby keeps removing or trying to remove their hearing aids, we recommend that you:

- soothe your baby's upsets but do not let the hearing aids become a way to get your attention
- try to give your baby lots of positive attention in other ways (for example, reading picture or interactive books together, playing with toys together or singing songs with actions)
- have some emergency distractions to hand (for example, a favourite book, toy or snack)

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Please note that temperament plays a big role during this period and throughout toddlerhood. Babies who are more laid back, have regular schedules and are easy to soothe when they are unhappy are easier to train to leave their hearing aids alone. It can be harder for babies who are very active, sensitive to changes or easily upset.

As your baby develops their motor skills, it is important for you to teach them that only adults can take their hearing aids off, **not** babies or children.

Ideally, your baby should wear their hearing aids all the time while they are awake as they help with brain, language and social development.

Hearing aid retention accessories

You can find a wide range of accessories online that can help to keep hearing aids on babies. However, it is important to note that every baby is different. Something that helps one baby may irritate another.

We have found that hearing aid retention accessories are typically most helpful for babies aged 12 months and older who like to remove their hearing aids. However, many babies manage well without any accessories.

Hearing aid retention accessories can include:

- toupee tape or wig tape
- hearing aid retention clips
- hearing aid caps
- hearing aid retention bands (also known as hearing aid headbands or suspenders)
- hearing aid retention loops for glasses (if your baby wears glasses and hearing aids)

Ask your baby's audiologist for more information about these accessories. Hearing aid caps, retention bands and loops can be purchased online from several retailers. You can find these by searching online.

Please note that crochet or mesh fabric hearing aid headbands and caps may work best for your baby, as sound can pass through the material better.

Further support

Getting your baby to wear and keep their hearing aids on can be challenging. For additional support, please visit the National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS) website (see 'Useful links' section on page 4) or ask your baby's audiologist to provide you with details for a specialist teacher advisor.

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Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us.

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Brintons Terrace
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Hampshire
SO14 0YG

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Email: rshaudiology@uhs.nhs.uk

Useful links

National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS)

www.ndcs.org.uk

www.ndcs.org.uk/advice-and-support/all-advice-and-support-topics/hearing-aids-implants-and-assistive-technology/hearing-aids-and-implants/keeping-hearing-aids-and-implants-babies-and-toddlers

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For help preparing for your visit, arranging an interpreter or accessing the hospital, please visit **www.uhs.nhs.uk/additionalsupport**

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