



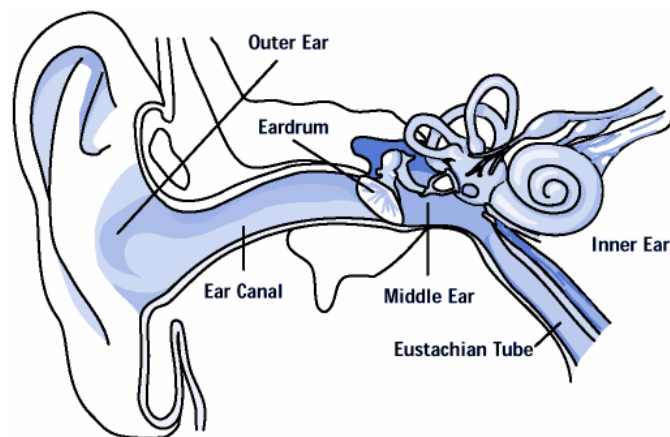
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## USE OF HEARING AIDS WITH EARDRUM PERFORATIONS

### Introduction

Here is a sketch of the human ear:



The ear canal is open to the air at the outer end, and is closed by the **Eardrum** at the inner end.

Beyond the **Eardrum** is a small cavity called the **Middle Ear**.

The **Eardrum** is a thin curtain of skin which lets sound through - but prevents water, dirt etc entering the **Middle Ear**.

In most people the **Eardrum** is intact and so acts as a perfect seal thus preventing anything entering the **Middle Ear**.

However in a few people the **Eardrum** is damaged - or even missing - and so water, dirt etc could enter the **Middle Ear**.

If dirt, water etc enter the **Middle Ear** then infections are possible, so this situation should be avoided.

Perforation of the **Eardrum** can result in infections even without the use of a hearing aid.

Use of a hearing aid in some cases can lead to increased problems.

The hearing aid can introduce dirt etc into the ear, possibly increasing the risk of infection.

Additionally, the increase in dampness in the ear caused by the presence of a hearing aid can increase the risk of infection.

In view of these possible problems, users of hearing aids with perforations should follow these guidelines:

# **Guidelines for use of a hearing aid with an eardrum perforation**

## **1. Keep the hearing aid clean at all times**

In order to prevent introduction of dirt etc into the ear canal please ensure that the hearing aid is kept clean at all times.

If the aid is washable, use slightly warm, mildly soapy water to clean it.

If the hearing aid is not washable then clean it with a non-alcoholic antiseptic "wipe" before use. (Alcohol can damage the plastics of hearing aids)

Ensure that your hands are very clean when inserting your hearing aid.

Do not insert your hearing aid when in dirty or dusty environments.

Store the hearing aid in a clean container when not in use.

## **2. Keep your ear canal as dry as possible at all times**

The ear canal needs to be kept as dry as possible.

If your hearing aid totally blocks the ear canal then condensation can build up.

(Some hearing aids have ventilation holes which can help minimise this problem)

It would be wise to remove the hearing aid for a short "break" at regular periods during the day - or when not needed - in order to allow the ear to "breathe" and stay dry.

## **3. Stay aware of any possible infection**

If you suspect that you have any sort of infection, stop wearing the hearing aid, and contact your GP for a check up.

## **4. Have your ear examined on a regular basis**

It might be wise to have your ear examined on a regular basis to ensure that no problems are building up.

DISCLAIMER: This information is provided purely as informal non-medical advice. If you have any concerns, worries or need further advice please contact your medical practitioner.

*Blackminster Hearing Centre is a trading division of Augmentics Ltd  
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