

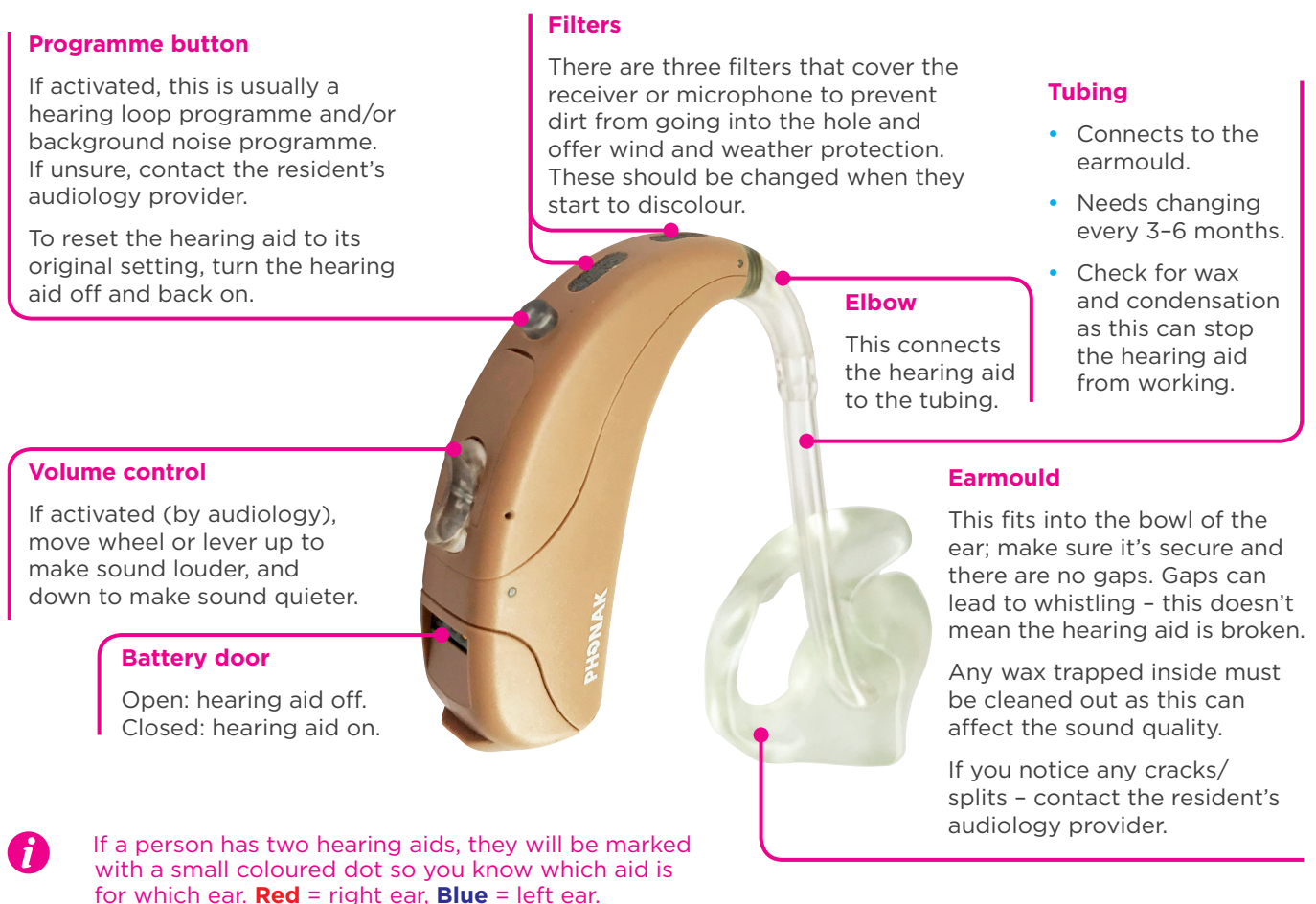
Looking after standard-fit hearing aids

This information sheet provides information about standard-fit hearing aids that have an earmould (see image below).

For information about hearing aids with a small earpiece (known as a 'dome') that sits inside the ear canal, see the information sheet *Looking after open-fit hearing aids*.

Standard-fit hearing aids

Each audiology provider may have slightly different styles or names of standard-fit hearing aids, but they all look similar to the model shown here.



Fitting standard-fit hearing aids

Push the earmould firmly into the 'bowl' of the person's ear, and place the hearing aid behind the ear. Image 1 shows what a correctly fitted hearing aid looks like. Image 2 shows an image of a hearing aid with an earmould that isn't fitted properly.



Cleaning and checking hearing aids

When someone has their hearing aids fitted, they should be given written instructions about how to look after them. If you don't have access to this information, or if it's not clear, ask the resident's audiology provider for advice.

Once a day:

- **Clean the main part of the hearing aid** – wipe it carefully with a soft, dry cloth or tissue. Take care not to get it wet – this will damage the hearing aid.
- **Clean the earmould** – again, use a soft, dry cloth or tissue. Don't use any chemicals as they could damage it. Use a pin or something similar to remove any wax or debris that has got into the channel that goes through the earmould.

- **Check the tubing** – make sure it's not hard or brittle, split or blocked by wax. Tubing should be soft and flexible. If the tubing looks damaged or blocked by wax, it will need replacing by an audiologist.
- **Check the earmould** – make sure it's not cracked or split. Earmoulds will naturally discolour over time. If the earmould looks damaged or split, it will need replacing by an audiologist.

Once a week:

- **Wash the earmould** – first check with the resident's audiology provider that the following instructions are suitable for their hearing aid:
 - Gently pull the soft tubing off the hooked part of the hearing aid by holding onto the tubing with one hand, and the hook of the aid with the other, and tugging gently. Don't pull the tubing out of the earmould as you won't get it back in again.
 - Wash the earmould (with its tubing still in place) in warm, soapy water. Use a nailbrush or a vent cleaner (or both) to remove any wax. Rinse it well, blow down the tubing to get the water out and leave it to dry overnight. Then push the tubing back onto the hearing aid (make sure the earmould is the right way round, as shown in the picture on the right).



- **Change the hearing aid batteries** – check which colour/type to use; this information should be included in the resident’s **Hearing aid care plan**. Remove the sticker from the battery and check it’s in correctly.

 The Action on Hearing Loss online shop sells cleaning equipment and hearing aid storage boxes to help you keep residents’ hearing aids clean and safe. Visit actiononhearingloss.org.uk/shop/hearing-aid-accessories

Hearing aids not working as they should?

Check that:

- hearing aids are on
- hearing aids are on the standard ‘programme/setting’ by turning them off and on again
- volume is turned up
- earmoulds and tubing aren’t damaged, squished, split or blocked with ear wax
- tubing is clear of water droplets; if not, gently pull the tubing off the hooked part of the aid and shake to remove.

Hearing aids whistling?

- Check the earmould is in the ear properly.
- Decrease the volume slightly (if the hearing aid has volume control).

- Check hearing aids are not on the loop setting.
- Wax blocking the ears can make hearing aids whistle – a GP can check this. Also see the information on wax management in the guide ***Supporting older people with hearing loss in care settings***.

If the hearing aid still isn’t working properly, contact the resident’s audiology provider.

When to refer to audiology

You will need to contact the resident’s audiology provider when problems with hearing aids arise, and in the following situations:

- **When hearing aids need retubing** – tubing needs replacing every 3–6 months, or earlier if it is hard/brittle, split or blocked by wax, or damaged.
- **When earmoulds need replacing** – they need replacing if they are cracked or split, or no longer fit correctly. It’s recommended that earmoulds are checked for wear and tear every three months. They may need replacing every three years.
- **When filters need changing** – they should be changed when they start to discolour, or every six months.

- **To find out more about hearing aid settings** – hearing aids can be set up to work independently or in sync (one hearing aid controls the other). Sometimes, one hearing aid is set up to change programmes (such as ‘hearing loop’, ‘music’, ‘noise reduction’, and so on) and the other controls the volume. Hearing aids are set up differently for each person; some may have a programme

button and some may have a volume button/switch or both. If a resident’s hearing aid manual doesn’t contain this information, please contact their audiology provider.

- **When the resident is due a hearing assessment** – every three years, people with hearing aids are entitled to a hearing re-assessment on the NHS. This is recommended as hearing loss can change over time.

Questions about hearing loss or tinnitus?

Contact the free Action on Hearing Loss Information Line:

Telephone: **0808 808 0123** (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm)

SMS: **0780 000 0360** (standard text message rates apply)

Email: **information@hearingloss.org.uk**

You can also visit the Action on Hearing Loss website for information and support: **actiononhearingloss.org.uk**

