

Hearing Loss and Hearing Aid Batteries

Useful Tips

You use zinc-air batteries for your hearing aid. These batteries use zinc and air (oxygen) as a “fuel”.

There are one, two, or (even better) three or four tiny holes on the +-side of the battery. These holes are tightly sealed with a colored sticker when you purchase the battery.

The battery stickers are color-coded. The color of the sticker shows the correct size of the battery fitting to your hearing aid (as outlined in the booklet for your specific hearing aid). Never try to squeeze batteries with a different color-coding into your hearing aid.

How to use the battery:

1. Detach the colored **sticker** which seals the tiny holes of the battery.
2. Wait at least **5 minutes** so that enough oxygen can penetrate through the tiny holes into the battery. Oxygen initiates the chemical process within the battery to produce current in the battery.
(Once you have detached the sealing sticker you can no longer stop the chemical process. Don't “reseal” the battery again in the hope of prolonging the life of the battery. This will only make the current production worse.)
3. Correctly **insert** the battery into the battery compartment (never use force; if inserted correctly you do not need to). The side with the tiny holes is the **+-side**. There is a small red + sign on the battery compartment for your help.
4. **Turn** the hearing aid **on**.
5. **Adjust** the **volume control** (If your hearing aid has automatic volume control you do not have to adjust it).

In the evening:

1. **Turn** your hearing aid **off**.
2. **Open** the **battery compartment** and put your hearing aid **open** in a safe place (not sealed in a plastic bag or in an air-tight box!) so that during the night enough **oxygen from the air** can penetrate through the tiny holes of the zinc-air battery. This is important for a constant current production during the next day.

Opening the battery compartment also helps to **dehumidify** the sensitive electronics of the hearing aid from **moisture** and **sweat** (especially in areas with high humidity).

If your hearing aid does not work well during the day it might be a good idea to open the battery compartment occasionally (to expose it to oxygen).

How long will hearing aid batteries last?

This depends on the following factors:

1. The size of your specific color-coded hearing aid battery (In the Ear [ITE] hearing aids have smaller batteries than Behind the Ear [BTE] hearing aids).
2. The amount of amplification you need (depending on your hearing loss).
3. The length of time you wear your hearing aid.
4. Depending on these three factors, hearing aid batteries last from a couple of days up to a couple of weeks (usually 8-10 days).

In some modern hearing aids you hear a **special sound** (e.g. four tones) when the current of the battery gets too low. **Replace** the battery as soon as possible.

Additional basic information

It is strongly **recommended** that you use both hearing aids (red color, right ear; blue color, left ear) **from morning to evening** (you may take out your hearing aids during naptime). Your brain has to adjust to the new hearing situation and the new sounds you have not heard before wearing a hearing aid. This learning process of your hearing nerve and your brain can take up to a whole year!

Room acoustics

In **difficult acoustic situations** with a lot of **reverberation** (echo) (some churches, rooms with a lot of glass, stone floors, non-absorbent ceilings, no carpets, no curtains) you will have **problems understanding speech** even with the most advanced hearing aids. This is also the case when a lot of people are together and all are talking at the same time ("cocktail party effect").

Phone calls

Calling with a **telephone** is very difficult for hard of hearing persons even with a hearing aid. **Cancel** all **other sound sources** (radio, television etc.) while you are on the phone. Ask your partner not to comment while you are on the phone. Use the telephone in the **room with the least reverberation** (e.g. bedroom, the quilt on the king size bed and the heavy curtains on the windows absorb a lot of reverberation).

Communication

Ask people to **face you directly** when they talk to you (and not to talk to you from the back). The **microphone** of your hearing aid picks up the **sound best from the front**. If people **face you** while talking to you, you can also **read their lips**, which supports understanding of speech.

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Helpful information can also be found at www.hearingloss.org, the website of the Hearing Loss Association of America.