

Summer hearing aid care

Written by Dr. Stephanie Long, Audiologist

Summer hearing aid care Now that summer is finally here, it is time to think about how to care for your hearing aids when out enjoying the pleasant weather. Whether you're out golfing, out on the boat or simply enjoying your backyard, summer heat and humidity can be a problem for hearing aids. In addition to heat and humidity, dust or dirt can also be a problem. I spent the last several hours working in my garden and know firsthand how quickly you can get dirty and hot!

To be clear, it is important to be able to wear your hearing aids all of the time. Hearing friends and family while enjoying summer activities is part of what makes summer fun. In addition, hearing the birds, crickets, frogs and other sounds of summer is part of why many people want hearing aids in the first place. Participating fully in all of these activities without missing out on one laugh, bird song or conversation is important! So what should you do to keep your hearing aids in good shape while enjoying these activities?



First of all, most — but not all — behind-the-ear (*BTE*) style hearing aids are now at least moisture resistant. This has been true for several years. If you are not sure if yours is, consult your audiologist; he or she can tell you quite easily. If you wear an in-the-ear (*ITE*) style aid, these are more prone to moisture problems as well.

Unless you have the Siemens Aquarius hearing aid, (*which you really can go swimming with*) you should follow some simple precautions.

For example:

- **Wear a hat or use an umbrella when it is raining.**
- **Dry your hair before putting your hearing aids on (*if your hair touches the aids*).**
- **Wipe any obvious moisture off your hearing aids with a dry tissue.**
- **Changing the filters or domes on your aids more often than in the winter is also appropriate.**
- **Use a dry aid kit, such as Dry and Store, daily.**



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- Do not use hair driers, hot air, ovens, the microwave or anything else to dry your aids. If you do not have a dry aid kit, wipe the aid off and open the battery door so it can dry out, but do not use heat to dry your aid.
- Watch for corrosion on the battery. If you notice a white powder on the battery or battery contacts, replace the battery immediately. The battery contacts can be cleaned with battery contact cleaner or by gently brushing the corrosion off the contacts.
- When at the pool or lake, have a routine place to put your aids. If swimming or water sports are an important part of your life, you may want to invest in a small water-tight box, such as the OtterBox (*a brand of boxes*). These are relatively inexpensive; I found them online for less than \$12 in a variety of colors. This small investment is far less expensive than replacing or even repairing a hearing aid. If you had a box like this, even if your kayak capsizes or your bag falls overboard, your hearing aids will be dry.
- Remember to avoid your hearing aids when putting sunscreen on, as sunscreen can clog the tiny microphones and filters on hearing aids.
- If you have a BTE style hearing aid with a tube, remember to use an earmold blower to blow out any moisture in your tubing. If you can see bubbles of moisture, get rid of them.
- If for some reason you need to take your aids out, please kindly remember to take them with you! Do not leave them in your car. The inside of our cars can become so hot in the summer that the heat could damage your aids.

If you are unsure how to clean or dry your aids, talk with your audiologist; he or she should be happy to show you how to do this and provide you with any supplies you might need. *Enjoy the summer! There is no place more lovely than summer in Wisconsin; enjoy it and hear it all.*