

Active Deaf Kids

Guidelines and information to parents and professionals for encouraging participation
in sports

DEAF SPORTS AUSTRALIA

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Background

Participation in deaf sports at a young age boosts a child's self esteem, health and fitness, and confidence. The social benefits to the deaf child can include sense of belonging when participating in team sports, community inclusion and can lead them to greater achievements in school, athletics, regional and in states championships, Australian Deaf Games and international participation in the Deaflympic Games.

The Latest National Health Survey (NHS) conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) revealed 51.1% of deaf and hearing-impaired people were obese compared with the national average of 33.4%. In addition, 13.5% of the deaf community have diabetes (8% recorded for national average) and 41.7% lead sedentary lifestyles compared with the national average of 30.2%.

Deaf Sports Australia, the peak national sporting organisation for the deaf and hard of hearing, provides opportunities for deaf and hard of hearing participants in a range of sporting programs and events. The Active Deaf Kids (ADK) program was created in 2010 from the insights and ambitions of Deaf Sports Australia and is a grass roots project aimed to increase participation in sports by deaf and hard of hearing kids. The program facilitators founded a multifaceted initiative rolled out to schools to educate the community, teachers, sports groups, coaches, children and parents. And most importantly, role models were involved to relay experiences and inspire participation in sport

In 2011 DSA successfully delivered its Active Deaf Kids school education program Nationally across 36 schools and 400 students as part of a pilot program funded by the Australian Sports Commission.

The Active Deaf Kids program exhibited remarkable success and participation. The potential of this pilot program received notable appraisal from the Australian Sports Commission who will continue to work with Deaf Sports Australia to develop the program and have provided a further two years funding for the program.

The Active Deaf Kids program revealed sporting participation by students was extremely poor with less than 5% of deaf students participating in organised sporting events.

The Active Deaf Kids program aims to promote the healthy benefits of sports participation to deaf and hard of hearing students around Australia. Additionally, local mainstream sports are included within the school visits to demonstrate their role in encouraging participation in sport and supporting deaf and hard of hearing kids in sporting programs.

The success of the program relies on the contribution and support of :

- Deaf Sports facilitators
- Role models
- School community
- Coaches, umpires and sporting group committees
- Parents
- Audiologists, Specialists and Teachers of the Deaf
- Advocates for deaf community

The Active Deaf Kids program has identified that one of the key challenges limiting deaf students' sporting participation was associated with safety concerns and hesitation of parents consenting to their child to participate in sports due to wearing cochlear implant and hearing aids. Of importance, DSA seek the support and expertise of audiologists and hearing networks to advocate deaf students participation in sport with expert advice on hearing devices which address safety concerns and disseminate information to parents, schools, state education departments, sporting clubs and organisations. As part of the Active Deaf Kids Program DSA will produce a reflective resource on hearing aid safety that will be available to parents, sports groups, key Deaf organisations and consultants. The booklet will be easy to understand, support participation in sports, provide safety tips and facts for wearing hearing devices when participating in sports and provide an opportunity for the hearing practitioner to excite a deaf child's interest in team sports.

Deaf Sports Australia have shown their commitment to the Active Deaf Kids program and school education project. They have strengthened their objectives and will reach more than 600 deaf and hard of hearing kids as they travel around Australia this year.

Audiologists and key Deaf Organisations are invited to consider their role in encouraging participation in sports. Particularly, their role in guiding and supporting deaf kids of the safety aspects when playing sports.

Safety Considerations and Handling

You can continue to enjoy sports and activities with your cochlear implant and hearing aid – just be sure to wear the appropriate protective gear.

Products and Safety tips when wearing hearing devices

Cochlear implants

Participation in sports with a cochlear implant can be enjoyed and encouraged, with some preparation. The following are some tips and guidance:

NUCLEUS 5 DEVICE AND FREEDOM DEVICE

Protection of cochlear implant

Moisture and dirt:

- **Ear Gear**¹ will protect the hearing instrument or ear level processor against sweat, moisture, and dirt. The protective spandex covers are acoustically transparent, so they will not alter the sound quality – electroacoustical analysis tests indicate that there is no more than a 1 dB reduction with Ear Gear (essentially, it is transparent) and no reduction with directional systems.
- **Hearing aid sweat bands** – worn over the processor and device, can help to prevent moisture damage and allow devices to remain stable at ear/head level.

Loss of Device

- **Ear Gear** has an option for attaching a cord which prevents your hearing instrument against loss. Suitable for team sports such as soccer, basketball, netball etc when child is likely to be very active and at ear device slips off ear, the

¹ **Ear Gear** – armour protection for hearing aids to prevent damage from dirt, moisture and protect from loss when playing sport www.gearforears.com. Ear Gear has a unique double wall of spandex that provides protection against sweat, rain, and moisture of all kinds. Ear Gear spandex absorbs moisture, and prevents it from reaching the hearing instrument's microphone port, battery door, and sensitive interior circuitry.

snap clip is fastened to child's shirt so device is not lost from the child's body.

Sports requiring a helmet

- Purchasing a sport-specific helmet may help protect the internal components of your cochlear implant from impacts during strenuous activities.
- Wearing a thin "sweat band" to place around the forehead and over the processor or microphone or a thin 'skull cap' over the head, will keep the processor and ear device stable while putting the helmet on
- It is **not** recommended to physically alter a helmet as this will affect the safety qualities of the helmet.

Maintenance of cochlear implant

Rechargeable Batteries

- Rechargeable batteries must be used in the processor to ensure its water and moisture resistant ratings..

Microphone Protectors

- Participating in sports will expose the processor to excess moisture so it is important to change the microphone protectors periodically to ensure best hearing performance.

Dehumidifier kits

- Dry-aid containers are ideal protective jars to store the cochlear implant processor and at ear device as it will dry the moisture that has accumulated on the processor and microphone during the day

High Impact Activities

Activities such as skydiving, bungee jumping, rugby, AFL football, roller coasters and other activities that place sudden, high impact pressure to a persons head, are **not recommended** for CI recipients. If participation in these high-impact activities are engaged, consider the following cautions:

- wear a helmet that allows enough spacing over the implant site to prevent pressure from being applied. **Important note:** the helmet may help to reduce impact forces but will not fully protect the implant system.

- It is recommended that CI recipients do not wear the external equipment (including processor and at ear level device) when participating in these activities.

Hearing Aids

Participation in sports when wearing hearing aids can be enjoyed and encouraged, with some preparation. The following are some tips and guidance:

Protection of the hearing aid device

Moisture and dirt:

- **Ear Gear**² will protect the hearing instrument against sweat, moisture, and dirt. The protective spandex covers are acoustically transparent, so they will not alter the sound quality and no reduction with directional systems occurs. Of additional benefit, the ear gear will prevent wind noise effects to the microphone ports.
- **Hearing aid sweat bands** – worn over the hearing aid, head bands can help to prevent moisture damage and allow devices to remain stable at ear/head level.

Loss of Device

- **Ear Gear** has an option for attaching a cord which prevents your hearing instrument against loss. Suitable for team sports such as soccer, basketball, netball etc when child is likely to be very active and hearing aid is likely to slip off the ear, the snap clip is fastened to the child's shirt so device is not lost from the child's body.
- **Siemens Sports Clip**³ - a significant proportion of children fitted in Australia under the care of Australian Hearing are prescribed Siemens Hearing instruments. The Sports Clip can be attached to the device and extends under the ear past the ear lobe and back to the Tragus. This accessory gives the device the ability to lock onto the whole ear providing superior retention.

² **Ear Gear** – armour protection for hearing aids and cochlear implants to prevent damage from dirt, moisture and protect from loss when playing sport www.gearforears.com. Ear Gear has a unique double wall of spandex that provides protection against sweat, rain, and moisture of all kinds. Ear Gear spandex absorbs moisture, and prevents it from reaching the hearing instrument's microphone port, battery door, and sensitive interior circuitry.

³ **Siemens Sport Clip** supports the retention of your hearing instruments during sportive activities. Currently it is an option for the Aquarius hearing aid range but could be used with other same sized BTE devices

Sports requiring a helmet

- Purchasing a sport-specific helmet may help protect the internal components of your hearing aid from impact during strenuous activities.
- Wearing a thin "sweat band" to place around the forehead and over the hearing aid or a thin 'skull cap' over the head, will keep the device stable while putting the helmet on
- It is **not** recommended to physically alter a helmet as this will affect the safety qualities of the helmet.

Maintenance of hearing aid

Microphone Protectors

- Participating in sports will expose the hearing aid to dust and excess moisture so it is important to change the microphone protectors periodically to ensure best device performance.

Dehumidifier kits

- Dry-aid containers are ideal protective jars to store the hearing aids as it will dry the moisture that has accumulated on the processor and microphone during the day. Routinely place the hearing aid, battery door opened, and ear mould in to the dry-aid container.

High Impact Activities

Activities such as skydiving, bungee jumping, rugby, AFL football, roller coasters and other activities that place sudden, high impact pressure to a persons head, are **not recommended** for hearing aid wearers. If participation in these high-impact activities are engaged, consider the following cautions:

- wear a helmet that allows enough spacing over the implant site to prevent pressure from being applied. **Important note:** the helmet may help to reduce impact forces but will not fully protect the hearing aid.
- It is recommended that hearing aid users do not wear their hearing aid when participating in these activities.

RECOMMENDED PRODUCTS

Ear Gear

Ear Gear is available in a variety of models and sizes. Each model is available as following options:

- Corded - pair of sleeves each with an elastic cord that attaches it to the one clip
- Cordless – pair of sleeves
- Mono - single sleeve with a cord and clip

Recommended Retail hearing aids (and wholesale) price:

- Corded \$ 36.00 (\$ 23.70)
- Cordless \$ 32.00 (\$ 20.75)
- Mono \$ 32.00 (\$ 20.75)

Recommended Retail cochlear implant devices (and wholesale) price:

- Corded \$38.00 (\$ 26.65)
- Cordless \$ 35.00 (\$ 23.70)
- Mono \$ 35.00 (\$ 23.75)

Distributor:

Phoenix Hearing Instruments

Telephone: 07 3852 4622

Address: Unit 6, 49 Butterfield Street
Herston, QLD 4006



Ear Band-it's

Ear Band-It is available in a variety of colours and sizes.

The headband is designed to hold ear plugs or ear moulds in place while you enjoy water activities or sports. Extra durable 3mm neoprene with adjustable Velcro® closure. Ear Band-It's unique design offers ultimate comfort and protection for the ears.

Please note, the material and construction of the Band-It will obstruct sound transmission and amplification of hearing aid.

Recommended Retail (and wholesale) price:

- Sizes small-large \$ 36.00 (\$ 22.00)

Distributor:

Phoenix Hearing Instruments

Telephone: 07 3852 4622

Address: Unit 6, 49 Butterfield Street
 Herston, QLD 4006



Dri-Aid dehumidifier

The Dri-Aid Kit absorbs moisture from your hearing aid, prolonging its lifetime and increasing its sound quality. Place hearing aids in the container every night, as a regular part of your hearing aid cleaning regimen. A Silica pouch placed inside the jar, draws moisture out of the hearing aid. Dri Aid can be used over and over again.

Recommended Retail (and wholesale) price:

- Phoenix Dri-Aid kit \$ 6.00 (\$ 3.40)

Distributor:

Phoenix Hearing Instruments

Telephone: 07 3852 4622

Address: Unit 6, 49 Butterfield Street
 Herston, QLD 4006

Siemens Sport Clip

The Sport Clip supports the retention of your hearing instruments during sportive activities. The “Sports Clip” can be attached to a BTE hearing aid and extends under the ear past the ear lobe and back to the Tragus. This accessory gives the device the ability to lock onto the whole ear providing superior retention.

The Sports Clip is an accessory to the Siemens Aquarius hearing aid mode. The Aquarius is designed for sports and when fitted with a specific ear mould (Swim Mold) it provides a seal in the ear to prevent water ingress through the mold tubing, making it perfect for swimming.

Recommended Retail (and wholesale) price:

- Sports Clip \$ 0.00 (\$ 0.00)

Distributor:

Siemens Hearing Instruments

Telephone: (07) 3858 7700

Level 4, 11 Finchley Street, Milton QLD 4046

www.siemens.com.au



RESOURCES

1. Phoenix Hearing Instruments

Telephone: 07 3852 4622
Address: Unit 6, 49 Butterfield Street
Herston, QLD 4006
Web: www.phoenixhearing.com.au

Links:

http://www.gearforears.com/sites/www.gearforears.com/files/downloads/ear_gear_display_board.pdf
http://www.gearforears.com/sites/www.gearforears.com/files/downloads/ear_gear_brochure_web.pdf
<http://www.phoenixhearing.com.au/pdfdocs/PHIEarGearOrder%202010.pdf>
http://www.gearforears.com/files/downloads/ear_gear_fit_list.pdf

2. Siemens hearing instruments

Telephone: (07) 3858 7700
Level 4, 11 Finchley Street, Milton QLD 4046
Web: www.siemens.com.au

3. Cochlear America

<http://products.cochlearamericas.com/support/nucleus/nucleus5/living-your-device/sports> (Nucleus 5)
<http://products.cochlearamericas.com/support/nucleus/freedom/living-your-implant/living-your-device/sports> (Freedom)
<http://products.cochlearamericas.com/products/introducing-nucleus-system/2-nucleus-system/water>
<http://products.cochlearamericas.com/support/nucleus/freedom/faqs/sports-and-physical-activities-faqs>