

## Patient information

# CROS and BiCROS hearing aids

CROS stands for **C**ontralateral **R**outing **O**f **S**ound

A **CROS** hearing aid is a special type of hearing aid for people who are deaf in one ear and have normal hearing in the other ear.

A **BiCROS** hearing aid is similar to a CROS hearing aid but is for people who are deaf in one ear but also hearing impaired in their better ear.

With CROS or BiCROS hearing aids, sound is wirelessly transmitted from the deaf ear into the better ear. What looks like a conventional hearing aid is worn on the deaf ear, but this is a microphone only. This microphone picks up sound from your poorer side and sends it via a wireless connection into a conventional hearing aid on your better ear. The sound can also be amplified if you have a hearing impairment in your better ear.

### Potential benefits of a CROS or BiCROS hearing aid

- To be able to hear sounds from both sides without turning your head.
- This can mean you are less likely to miss someone speaking to you from your poor side.
- This can make you feel less 'cut-off' on your bad hearing side.
- In situations where there is little background noise and the room acoustics are good the aids should be of help.

### What a CROS or BiCROS hearing aid may *not* help with:

- These hearing aids cannot improve your ability to tell where a sound is coming from

(sound localisation).

- Background noise and poor acoustic environments are always challenging for hearing aid users.
- If you have your bad ear towards noise the CROS may make it harder to hear than if you didn't have the aid in.
- If you have your good ear towards noise and there is speech coming from the bad side then the CROS might help somewhat to hear the speech, although background noise will always be challenging.

All hearing aid users need to use good communication tactics or strategies to help them cope with listening situations. Please ask for our leaflet on 'Communication tactics for everyone and for hearing loss'. For people who are deaf in one ear the following tactics might be particularly helpful:

- Ask people to stand or sit on your better hearing side, where possible.
- In noisy situations it might help to sit with your back to the wall or in the corner of the room, with your better hearing ear directed to the rest of the room.

## Using your CROS hearing aid

### Volume control

You may have a volume control activated on your hearing aid, if so then this works by:

- Pressing the button on your **right** aid to **increase** the sound.
- Pressing the button on your **left** aid to **decrease** the sound.

### Programmes

You may have an extra programme on your aids if you do not have the volume control. You can have either a volume control or programme, but not both.

If you have an extra programme on your hearing aid e.g. loop / telecoil, then to access this you need to press the button on the back of the hearing aid that you wear in your better ear:

- Press once for your extra programme (Programme 1): you will hear one 'beep'.

- Press again to go back to your start-up / default or main listening programme: you will hear a 'bing bong' sound.

When you turn the hearing aids off they automatically reset to their original volume and programme settings for when you next turn them on.

## **Beeps**

The CROS or BiCROS hearing aids have alerts for a low battery, with a different alert sound on each side. They also have alerts for loss of wireless connection between the two aids, and for re-connection. The alert sounds are as follows:

- Low battery (on good side) = two long 'beeps'.
- Low battery (on the bad side) = two long 'beeps' then a 'ding dong'.
- Lost connection: 'ding dong' (descending – getting lower in pitch).
- Re-connection: 'ding dong' (ascending – getting higher in pitch).

## **Batteries**

The battery life of your hearing aids depends on how the hearing aids are set and how much you use them. The wireless communication between the two hearing aids drains the battery more quickly than in conventional hearing aids.

- Batteries for the CROS aid (for your bad ear) will last approximately two to three days per battery.
- Batteries for the hearing aid (for your better ear) will last approximately three to four days per battery.

## **Loss of connection**

The aids can sometimes spontaneously lose their connection to each other. You may have to turn them off and on again to reconnect them.

Sometimes the aids take longer than normal to turn on or to re-connect to one another, up to 15 seconds is considered normal by the manufacturer.

In some cases the arms of glasses seem to interfere with the wireless signal between

the aids. Try moving the aids above the arms of the glasses to see if this helps. If this does not work you might have to try glasses with smaller or thinner arms. Metal arms on glasses, rather than plastic, might be more likely to interfere with the wireless signal.

## **Maintenance of CROS and BiCROS hearing aids**

The thin tubes and domes on your hearing aids need changing every 3-6 months, you will need to book an appointment at the West Suffolk Hospital for this: please telephone **(01284) 713507** to make an appointment. It would be helpful if you tell our admin team that you have a CROS or BiCROS hearing aid when you make your appointment.

Please note that the volunteers at the Suffolk Hearing Advisory Service / Sensing Change hearing aid maintenance sessions that are run in the community will **not** have spare tubes or domes for these specialist hearing aids. They should be able to supply you with batteries for your hearing aids.

Wipe your thin tubes and domes each day with a tissue, soft cloth, or wet wipe to keep them clean of dirt and wax, and prevent blockages that will cut off the sound.

## **Safety Information**

Please refer to the information in the manufacturer's booklet for more information. The information below is for a rough guide only.

## **Pacemakers and other implanted medical devices**

If you have an implanted medical device you **must check with your doctor whether it is safe to use a wireless hearing aid**. Most devices are fine, but the manufacturer may advise you to keep the hearing aids and any wireless accessories, a certain distance away from the site of your implant at all times. If you experience any problems with your implanted device, stop using the CROS / BiCROS hearing aids immediately and contact your doctor.

## **Further sources of information**

Phonak Website (hearing aid manufacturer):

[http://www.phonak.com/com/b2c/en/products/hearing\\_instruments/cros/overview.html](http://www.phonak.com/com/b2c/en/products/hearing_instruments/cros/overview.html)

## **Acknowledgements**

*'Getting used to your wireless CROS / BiCROS hearing aid'. Audiology Department, Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust*

*If you would like any information regarding access to the West Suffolk Hospital and its facilities please visit the website for AccessAble (the new name for DisabledGo)*

*<https://www.accessable.co.uk/organisations/west-suffolk-nhs-foundation-trust>*



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