



AEA

**European Hygiene Guidelines
for Hearing Aid Professionals**



The following "European Hygiene Guidelines for Hearing Aid Professionals" are based on the VBA Guidelines, 'Richtlijnen hygiëne en infectiepreventie in de audiologische praktijk', developed by Melina Willems (audiologist, lecturer in audiology, Artevelde University of Applied Sciences, Ghent), in cooperation with the Flemish Professional Association for Audiologists 'VBA, Vlaamse Beroepsvereniging Audiologen'.

ECAT (European Committee for Audiology and Technology) has adapted these Guidelines for the European Association of Hearing Aid Professionals (AEA).

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1.0.0 Hand Hygiene Protocol

1.1.0 General Hand Hygiene Protocol

- Remove all jewellery or accessories from hands and wrists.
- Keep nails short and clean.
- Do not wear nail polish or artificial nails.
- Wash hands with Soap and Water:
 - if they are visibly soiled,
 - at the beginning and at the end of every day,
 - if they become contaminated with body fluids after blowing your nose, using the toilet, smoking and applying cosmetics or lip Balm
- Use antiseptic product:
 - before and after physical contact with a patient.
 - before handling of disinfected material and after contact with infected material.
 - after prolonged duration of glove use.
- Wear gloves before any potential contact with blood or body fluids.

1.1.1 Handwashing Protocol

- Follow General Rules 1.1.0
- Wet hands with running water and apply a layer of liquid soap onto the palm of your hands.
- Rub well over the palms, back of hands, wrists and in between fingers, for a minimum of 10 seconds.
- Rinse hands thoroughly with running water.
- Dry hands with a clean (paper) towel and turn off the tap using the same used towel while avoiding direct contact with tap's surface.
- Discard the used towel without coming into direct contact with the refuse container.

1.1.2 Hand disinfection Protocol

- Observe General Protocol 1.1.0
- Use an alcohol or antiseptic based hand disinfectant.
- Spread the disinfectant over the palms of both hands and rub well over the palms, back of the hands, wrists and in between fingers. Do this for a minimum of 10 seconds (dependent on the type of product, see the specific user instructions for each product).
- Allow hands to dry before handling patients or equipment.

1.2.0 Use of Safety Gloves as Protective Barriers

1.2.1 Wearing Disposable Gloves

- In case of having any open wound or cut apply extra protection by using a band aid.
- Choose the correct glove size to ensure having a tight fit.
- Remove the first glove from the box by holding it by the wrist section and put it on.
- Using the previous step, take out the second glove with your bare hand and wear it.
- Replace the gloves immediately if torn or damaged.

1.2.2 Removing the gloves

- Using one hand pinch the gloves at the wrist of the other hand with two fingers.
- Remove the glove cautiously by pulling it from the wrist towards the fingertips and keep on holding it with the same hand you removed it with.
- Using the bare hand, slide two fingers inside the glove on the opposite hand to flip it inside out.
- Pull the glove over the wrist towards the fingertips while still holding the first glove inside the second one
- Throw the soiled gloves into the refuse container, without touching it.
- Use protocol 1.1.2.

2.0.0 Protocol for Disinfecting Surfaces

- Disinfect any used equipment and all contaminated surfaces as soon as the patient leaves the room with any of the following options
 - Using disinfectant wipes: dispose of the wipes appropriately after use.
 - Using a disinfectant spray: allow sufficient time for the disinfectant product to saturate as per instruction. If necessary, dry the surface with a clean paper towel and discard after use.

3.0.0 Audiometry Hygiene Protocol

3.1.0 Headphones

- Perform the hand hygiene protocol 1.0.0
- Disinfect the headphones before placing them on the patient's head.
- Place the headphones on the patient's head and perform the test.

- After completing the test remove the headphones and disinfect both ear cushions and the headband of the headphones with a disinfectant wipe.

3.2.0 Insert Phones

- Perform the hand hygiene protocol 1.0.0.
- Place a new set of foam tips onto the insert phones, squeeze the foam with clean fingertips and place the insert phones into the ear canal of the patient.
- After conducting the necessary tests remove the insert phones from the ear canal carefully.
- Remove the foam tips from the insert phones by gripping the base of the earbud to avoid contaminating your fingers with ear wax or other fluids
- Discard the used tips without coming in contact with the refuse container.
- Follow the hand hygiene protocol 1.0.0 as necessary.

3.3.0 Bone Conductor

- Wipe the Bone conductor using a wipe.
- Have the bone conductor carefully placed on the mastoid bone on the patient's head and perform the required test.
- After testing carefully remove the bone conductor from the patient's head and disinfect both the bone conductor and the headband with a disinfectant wipe.
- Follow the hand hygiene protocol 1.0.0 as necessary.

4.0.0 Hygiene protocol for using an Ultrasonic Cleaner

- Put on a pair of gloves in accordance with Protocol 1.2.1
- Fill the ultrasonic cleaning device with the recommended antiseptic product according to the device's instructions.
- Place the instruments or materials in the ultrasonic device, ensuring that they are completely submerged in the liquid.
- Switch on the device for the duration stated on the instructions unless it has pre-set timings.
- Remove the instruments or materials from the cleaner and rinse thoroughly with running water.
- Place the instruments or materials on a clean paper towel or in a cardboard kidney dish.
- Empty the ultrasonic cleaner after every use or on a daily basis depending on what has been cleaned and type of possible contamination the equipment was exposed to.
- Rinse out the device and use paper towels to dry it properly.
- Remove the soiled gloves in accordance with protocol 1.2.2.

5.0.0 Otoscopy Hygiene Protocol

5.1.0 Hygiene Protocol for Otoscopy with body fluid discharge, blood or a visible infection (refer patient for medical care as required)

- Put on a pair of gloves in accordance with protocol 1.2.1.
- Place a new plastic speculum on the otoscope and perform otoscopy.
- First examine the better-looking ear or better ear according to the patient's history and discard the speculum.
- Use a new clean speculum to examine the opposite ear.
- Always remove the speculum by gripping the base and dispose, without coming into direct contact with the refuge container.
- Put the otoscope away while avoiding contamination with the glove used to remove the speculum.
- Remove the gloves using protocol 1.2.2.
- Use Hand Hygiene Protocol 1.0.0 as necessary

5.2.0 Hygiene Protocol for Otoscopy in a normal looking healthy ear.

- Perform the hand hygiene protocol 1.0.0.
- Place a new plastic speculum on the otoscope and perform the otoscopic examination in both ears beginning from the better ear.
- Remove the speculum by gripping the base and dispose, without coming into direct contact with the refuge container.
- Repeat the hand hygiene protocol 1.0.0.

6.0.0 Ear impression Hygiene Protocol

- Perform the hand hygiene protocol 1.0.0.
- Perform otoscopy, keeping in mind the Hygiene protocol for Otoscopy 5.0.0, before taking the ear impression, to check oto-block placement and after the impression is removed.
- Use a clean disinfected light pen tip to push a new, clean oto-block down the ear canal. Please make sure that oto-block did not come in contact with work surfaces.
- While inserting the oto-block, you can use the same speculum on the otoscope to analyse the placement of the oto-block as long as it has been placed on a clean paper towel and not a contaminated surface.
- Although it should have already been clean, use an alcohol or disinfectant wipe to clean the impression syringe again before taking the impression.
- Ensure that the impression material must not have any direct contact with a work surface.

- Remove the ear impression from the ear canal, clean it from wax or other ear debris with a disinfectant wipe and place it in the necessary container.
- Disinfect the tip of the light pen and impression syringe with the use of a disinfectant wipe.
- Dispose of any used material or disposable items without coming in contact with the refuge container.
- Repeat the hand hygiene protocol 1.0.0

7.0.0 Hygiene Protocol for Handling Hearing Devices already being worn by Patients.

7.1.0 Hearing Aids

- Perform the hand hygiene protocol 1.0.0.
- In case of possible discharge or ear infections use safety gloves – protocol 1.2.0.
- Place the hearing aids on a new clean paper towel or a disinfected reusable tray.
- Wipe the surface of the hearing aid, ear mould, thin tube, dome, etc. with a disinfectant wipe and/ or brush slightly dipped in alcohol or a disinfectant solution.
- Dispose of the used material without coming into direct contact with the refuge container.
- Dispose of the paper towel in the refuge container after the hearing aids have been worn again by the patient and disinfect the used reusable tray.
- Repeat the hand hygiene protocol 1.0.0.

7.1.1 Hygiene protocol for using a stetoclip to perform a hearing aid listening check.

- Follow protocol 7.1.0 to disinfect the hearing device.
- Attach the hearing aid to the stetoclip to perform the listening check.
- When listening check has been completed, disinfect the part of the stetoclip that has been in contact with the hearing aid (or earmolds) with the use of a disinfectant wipe.

7.2.0 Earmolds

- Perform the hand hygiene protocol 1.0.0.
- In case of possible discharge or ear infections use safety gloves – protocol 1.2.0.
- Place the earmold on a new clean paper towel or a disinfected reusable tray.
- Disinfect the earmold with a disinfectant wipe or if possible clean it in the ultrasonic cleaner keeping in mind protocol 4.0.0
- Discard the paper towel and other used materials in the refuge container after the earmold has been returned to the patient. Avoid coming in contact with the refuge container

- In case a reusable tray was used, please disinfect after being used.
- Repeat the hand hygiene protocol 1.0.0

7.2.1

- Follow protocol 7.2.0 to disinfect the earmold.
- Always follow health and safety measures and wear PPEs when using a grinding or polishing device especially if there is no protective cover available. Recommended Personal Protective Equipments to be used are
 - safety goggles,
 - a lab coat
 - a disposable dust mask that covers both mouth and nose.
- Always disinfect the earmold before and after modification.
- Disinfect all working surfaces that were used during the mould modification.
- Dispose of the used disposable mask and material without coming into direct contact with the refuge container.
- Remove lab coat and clean the safety goggles after use.
- Perform the hand hygiene protocol 1.0.0

8.0.0 Hygiene protocol for performing REM Verification Tests

- Perform the hand hygiene protocol 1.0.0
- Follow otoscopy hygiene protocol 5.0.0
- Insert a new, clean, disposable probe tub into the ear canal and perform the REM.
- Following measurements, remove the probe tip without touching the end of the tip.
- Dispose of the probe tubs and or any disinfected wipes or materials without coming into direct contact with the refuge container.
- Repeat the hand hygiene protocol 1.0.0.

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