

Recommended Cleaning Protocols of Personal Assistive Listening Devices (ALD) in an EDUCATIONAL SETTING during COVID-19 Pandemic:



SD 47 (Powell River)

Auditory Outreach Provincial Resource Program

The procedures below are recommended for EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS only. Please note different protocols apply in health care settings. These guidelines were developed based on the recommended protocols from BC Provincial Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry (as of May 23, 2020), BC Centre for Disease Control on infection control, and assistive listening device (ALD) manufacturer Phonak's recommendations on equipment sanitization. These recommendations do not override any provincial protocols, guidelines from a professional regulatory body, or employer.

COVID-19 is an emerging, rapidly evolving situation. Please check resources, including the BC Centre for Disease Control <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19> and the Government of Canada <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19.html>, for the latest public health information.

- 1. Contact with Student and Personal Equipment** (e.g. hearing aids, CI processors, remote microphone receivers)
 - Physical contact with students (e.g. touching student's ear) and their devices should be avoided, unless it is essential for the proper use of hearing equipmentⁱ. If behavioural checks find possible equipment malfunction or a younger student requires help with putting on their devices, the trained TDHH, EA, teacher, or designated staff member, should use proper hand hygieneⁱⁱ BEFORE and AFTER contacting the students and/ or their equipment.
- 2. Attachment and Removal of Personal Receivers:**
 - RM receivers are frequently-touched surfaces and should be disinfected twice a dayⁱⁱⁱ. This is accomplished by wiping all surfaces of the RM receivers with a water-based surface disinfectant or alternatively, a solution with 70% isopropanol^{iv}. In all cleaning, please blot away excess moisture to avoid moisture damage.
 - To minimize physical contact, whenever possible and if student is trained in handling of the equipment, have student attach and remove RM receivers from their hearing aid (HA) or CI processor themselves.
 - If help from an adult is necessary, adult should use proper hand hygiene BEFORE and AFTER handling student's personal equipment.
 - Prior to attaching the RM receiver to the HA/CI, wipe all surfaces with a water-based surface disinfectant or alternatively, a solution with 70% isopropanol.
 - At the end of the school day, disinfect personal receivers by wiping them with a water-based surface disinfectant or alternatively, a solution with 70% isopropanol.
- 3. Monitoring of Equipment Function:**
 - As BEHAVIOURAL CHECKS are normally conducted from a distance (i.e. 2 metres to check HA/CI function and 3 metres to check RM), they are the best way to monitor students' equipment during a

pandemic and should be conducted on a daily basis, preferably before the start of each school day and whenever class resumes after breaks.

- Whenever possible, maintain a distance of 2 metres from the student when conducting ALD functionality checks.
- During a pandemic, LISTENING CHECKS of student's personal equipment with hearing aid stethoscope or monitor earphones are NOT RECOMMENDED when these tools are used with multiple students, as schools are not commonly equipped with medical grade sterilization equipment.

4. Handling of RM Transmitters (FM, DM, Soundfield Microphones, Pass-around Microphones, Etc.):

- Microphones and transmitters should NOT be shared during a pandemic. It is recommended each transmitter be labelled with one designated staff member's name.
- Pass-around microphones should NOT be used. Teachers are encouraged to repeat students' comments and questions for the whole class.
- RM transmitters are frequently-touched surfaces and should be disinfected at least twice per day. This is accomplished by wiping all surfaces of the transmitter with a water-based surface disinfectant or alternatively, a solution with 70% isopropanol at the beginning and end of each school day.
- BEFORE and AFTER handling the transmitter, the staff should use proper hand hygiene.

5. ALD Storage:

- All ALD should be stored in a secure, dry, and sanitized place shielded from circulating air and accessible only by the user.
- It is recommended RM receivers be stored in a hard case with a secure lid. The exterior and interior of the case should be wiped daily with a disinfectant wipe. The case should then be stored in a secure location, e.g. drawer at teacher's desk.
- As RM transmitters need to be charged at the end of the day, it is recommended they be stored in a dry secure place near a power outlet. The surfaces of the storage area should be wiped daily with a disinfectant wipe.

REFERENCES:

ⁱ Henry, Bonnie (2020). Letter to Health Care Workers dated March 23, 2020: "all non-essential and elective services involving direct physical contact with patients and clients should be reduced to minimal levels".

ⁱⁱ BC Ministry of Health (2011). Best Practice Guidelines for Cleaning, Disinfection and Sterilization of Critical and Semi-critical Medical Devices, p.11: "Hand Hygiene relates to the removal of visible soil and removal or killing of transient microorganisms from the hands ... using soap and running water or an alcohol-based hand rub".

ⁱⁱⁱ BC Centre for Disease Control (2020). Covid-19: Infection Prevention and Control Guidance for Community-based Allied Health Care Providers in Clinic Settings.

^{iv} Phonak Canada (2020). *Guideline (Covid 19) on Sanitization of Roger products in Classrooms*. Webinar dated April 28, 2020.