

COMPLY SNAP TIPS—YOUR DISPOSABLE EARMOLD ©Curtis Dickinson 4/2003

Comply Snap Tips is a brand name for disposable earmolds. Earmolds refer to Behind-the-Ear hearing aids. These are hearing aids that are placed behind the ear and bring the sound to the ear via plastic tubing from the hearing aid that connects to the earmold. It is this portion that the COMPLY Snap Tips can replace. The term Snap-Tip refers to the way the foam circle snaps onto the tubing with a solid click.

Anyone who might protest that it is not good to replace a custom earmold with a temporary foam type mold has a proper concern. And I thought the same until I tried them. But these are excellent. And you could become a believer too. But first a bit of earmold history: The sad truth about custom earmolds is that they often provide feedback--a whistling. In fact this is the number one complaint. A sadder fact is that there is a guaranteed way of making feedback-proof earmolds but it seems the Audioprosthologists (those who sell hearing aids) don't want to take the time to produce this perfect earmold. So we suffer. But now it may be possible to take matters into your own hands by using Comply Snap Tips. Comply Snap Tips may be a solution for your whistling earmolds. And they can feel so comfortable you just may want to replace your custom earmolds with them. There can be a savings too. Savings, comfort and freedom from feedback make these an easy try.

Basically Snap Tips consist of two pieces: The squishy foam circles and the tubing. The tubing snaps onto the foam piece. Voila! You have a Comply Snap Tip ready to use.

The foam part needs to be rolled between the fingers so that it is compressed before inserting into the ear. Some people have had to attempt this several times. It's not really difficult rather just requires a bit of dexterity or a knack, if you will. If you can roll a piece of play-doh into a cylinder shape between your fingers you can properly compress Snap Tips. When this is placed inside your ear, the warmth of the ear canal expands the foam thus providing a nice comfortable seal without the feeling of stuffiness.

The tubing part consists of a firm hard-plastic type elbow shape, color coded for left and right ear. From that is the plastic tubing that we are familiar with. Because the foam circle swivels on the plastic elbow, and the plastic elbow can be turned on the plastic tubing an excellent adjustment can be made to comfortably wear these Snap Tips.

There is a round white cloth-like disk that sits on the end of the foam circle part that enters the ear. This is a wax guard. Very nice indeed.

COMPLY Snap Tips are made in three different widths and three different depths.

To determine the width size, your existing earmold is placed against the circles drawn on the directions you receive with each set of Snap Tips. If you have not bought these before then the assorted size package is a good to learn which size works best. The depth size is determined by your hearing loss; measured by three criteria: a hearing loss of up to 45 dB, a hearing loss up to 65 dB and then up to 100 dB. These are 3mm, 6mm, and 9 mm in depth, respectively.

Should you be concerned about infectious diseases when using Snap Tips? The answer to that is common sense. Wash your hands before rolling the foam. It's the same thing with custom earmolds; you clean them daily, don't you? You do don't you? <g>

Now for my personal experience. When I used one (I only used one because one ear, believe it or not, has a hole so big [how big is it, Curtis?] it is so big that looking at my earmold makes you gulp and audioprosthologist s' cart out the 55 gallon drum of impression material and place it next to a heavy duty bread dough mixer. <bg>. Anyway I replaced my earmold with a COMPLY Snap-Tip inserted it into my ear and the first thing I exulted in was the sense of freedom. I could feel the air breezing by my ear. It did not feel stuffy any more. That alone was worth the experience. But the real test was hearing. After 5 days I grudgingly had to admit the hearing aid volume could not

be turned up enough so I could hear but not cause feedback. Dejected I put them aside and moved on with my life,
Eventually the company that makes these contacted me and when I told them my experience they suggested another size. So I did and voila! Worked wonderful—no feedback enough volume.

SCIENCE MATTERS:

From a scientific standpoint it was shown that Viscoelastic material (Comply Snap Tip Foam) prevented feedback up to 52 dB while the soft silicone and hard acrylic molds (two common ear mold materials) prevented feedback at 46 dB and 35 dB respectively.
And as we all know, movement of the jaw can cause feedback. Comply Snap Tips provide more flexibility in preventing feedback when you smile, eat and chat. COMPLY Snap Tips flex with your jaw movements, rather than move away from the ear like custom earmolds do.

These probably will not prevent feedback if your hearing loss is over 100 dB.

Each kit includes 10 Foam tips and one earpiece tubing. Instructions are included.

You may purchase these kits from your audioprosthologist.

You may also purchase them from the author of this column: www.hearing-loss-help-co.com

The manufacturer of these, are Hearing Components, Inc.

To learn more about the perfect earmold technology process, which was mentioned earlier in this column, please ask Curtis at Hearmeco@hearing-loss-help-co.com:

Happy hearing!

Regards,

Curtis

Hearmeco@hearing-loss-help-co.com