

Holiday Survival Guide 2025 - 2026

For families/individuals with devices managed by The Shepherd Centre First Sounds Program

The Shepherd Centre shutdown dates.

We are closed from 2pm Wednesday, 24 December 2025.

We will reopen on Monday, 5 January 2026.

If you or your child have any medical concerns during the holidays, please call your ENT specialist, GP or visit the closest hospital emergency department.

While The Shepherd Centre is closed for the holiday period, we encourage you to call us if you require any assistance with broken implantable hearing devices or you/your child are 'off air'.

The Shepherd Centre *First Sounds* Careline: 0414 692 914.

Voice messages only. We will do our best to respond as soon as we can.

Please leave a voice message with your name, number and brief reason for calling. Please do not text as we are unable to monitor texts. Messages are checked twice daily. Messages left late afternoon/evening will be addressed the next day.

Troubleshooting

If your implantable hearing device isn't working properly, **give these quick tips a try first.**

1. Visually check device for any loose connections or damage.
2. Check battery life via Nucleus smart app and/or replace with a charged battery.
3. Check coil cable visually and/or replace coil cable (if applicable).
4. Check microphone ports and/or replace microphone covers.
5. Restart the processor by turning off and back on.
6. Check magnet positioning and that the processor is on the correct ear.
7. Place device in your dehumidifier (moisture is a common issue in the warmer months).
8. If available, use your back-up processor.

If the issue continues, please call the *First Sounds Careline*, we're here to help.

Holiday Checklist (to help you prepare before you go away / services close):

1. Have you checked your child's device(s) recently? Think about the parts that typically get dirty or need replacing (microphone covers, coil cables etc). Do you have spare parts if you need them?
2. Do you have plenty of dehumidifier tablets for your dry kit?
3. If you have a spare device, do you know where it is? Is it in working order in case you need it?
Does it have the most recent settings loaded?
4. Have you packed all batteries, chargers, power banks and travel adaptors you may need?
5. Do you have waterproof or protective covers if your child will be around water?
6. Do you have a 'hearing essentials kit' ready for day trips (spare batteries, coil cables, microphone covers and Aqua + kit).

If you, or someone close to you, is in distress, a medical emergency or immediate danger call 000

**Wishing you a happy and safe holiday and New Year, from everyone at The Shepherd Centre.
We look forward to seeing you again in 2026!**

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General tips for families

The summer break is full of fun, family time and the occasional dash of chaos. For children using implantable hearing devices or hearing aids, a little planning can make the holidays smoother, safer and far more enjoyable. Here are simple, practical tips to help your family relax and make the most of the season.

1. Keep devices safe near water

Holidays often mean beaches, pools and splash parks.

- If available, use approved waterproof accessories if your child enjoys water play.
- Keep a dry pouch or container on hand for safe storage.
- After swimming, make sure the device and ear are dry before resuming wear.
- Salt and sand love mischief, so monitor devices particularly microphone ports to identify any blockages that may need attention.

2. Watch the heat

Australian summers can be unforgiving.

- Avoid leaving devices in hot cars, prams or direct sun.
- Use hats with a secure fit to shield devices while keeping microphones clear.
- If your child gets sweaty, dry their skin and hair around the device to prevent retention issues.
- Use dehumidifier to remove any moisture from the device.

3. Charge and pack smart

Travel days and festive outings can be noisy and long.

- Pack extra disposable or rechargeable batteries along with essential spare parts (eg coil cables) in your day bag.
- Pack any additional spare parts, chargers and power banks on trips (remove magnets & additional line re: charging banks etc).
- Create a small 'hearing essentials kit' so you're never caught short.

4. Keep up listening practice (in fun ways)

The holidays offer plenty of opportunities to connect, whether your family uses speech, sign, or a combination of both.

- Sing Christmas songs, read stories together or share your favourite memories from this year.
- Narrate what you're doing during holiday activities, cooking together is a great way to do this.
- Use festive themes; count decorations, describe lights, guess sounds at busy events.

5. Prepare for noisy gatherings

Family parties can feel like a sensory marathon.

- If available, choose quieter locations for conversations.
- Remind family members to face your child when speaking.
- Keep any assistive listening devices handy & charged (eg Roger, Mini Mic).
- Check in with your child to gauge how they are feeling and coping.

6. Travel tips

Whether you're flying, driving or catching a ferry:

- Keep devices on during travel unless advised otherwise by your audiologist.
- Explain to transport staff that your child relies on hearing technology (avoids confusion at security).
- Pack devices and accessories in your carry-on, not checked luggage.

7. Mix structure with rest

Routines inevitably shift during the holidays.

- Keep a simple rhythm for listening breaks, device care and quiet time.
- Don't worry if speech practice looks different, meaningful moments count most.

8. Know who to contact if something goes wrong:

- Check your backup equipment.
- Save your key holiday support numbers in your mobile phone.
- If your child becomes unwell or there is an emergency, always seek immediate medical care.

Emergency contacts and handy resources

If you, or someone close to you, is in distress, a medical emergency or immediate danger call 000

The Shepherd Centre *First Sounds* Careline: 0414 692 914 (voice messages only)

This careline is for families of children with implantable hearing devices managed by The Shepherd Centre. Please call for 'off air' concerns (ie. when a processor is lost, damaged, stopped working). Leave a voicemail with your name, number and brief reason for calling. Please do not text. Messages are checked twice daily, once in the morning and again mid-afternoon. Messages left late afternoon onwards will be addressed the following day.

Cochlear Customer Service: 1800 483 3123

Cochlear is closed from Monday, 22 December 2025, reopening on Monday, 5 January 2026.

Cochlear Device Help and Support: www.cochlear.com/us/en/home/ongoing-care-and-support/device-help-and-support and www.cochlear.com/us/en/connect/contact-us

Hearing Australia: 13 44 32

Hearing Australia will be closed from 1pm Wednesday, 24 December 2025. A limited number of hearing centres and services (eg call centre and support lines) will resume on Monday, 5 January 2026.

The majority of hearing centres will reopen on Monday, 12 January 2026.

For further details and HA support, please call 13 44 32 or refer to their website: www.hearing.com.au

Wellbeing, family services and mental health support contacts:

- **Karitane Careline:** Call 1300 CARING (1300 227 464) OR (02) 9794 2350. A free call back service. Their Child and Family Health Nurses will call you back within 24 hours. karitane.com.au
- **Tresillian Helpline:** Call 1300 272 736 (or 1300 827 282 in TAS). Open 7am–11pm, 7 days a week. Free service with counsellors experienced in offering advice to those with children under five. tresillian.org.au
- **Parentline NSW:** Free call 1300 1300 52 or visit parentline.org.au: Mon-Fri 9am-9pm, Sat/Sun 4pm-9pm. Trained counsellors with experience in offering advice and information to parents and carers.
- **Kids Helpline:** Call 1800 55 1800. Free, confidential counselling for young people (aged 5 to 25 years), staffed by professional counsellors. kidshelpline.com.au
- **Lifeline:** a national charity providing all Australians experiencing emotional distress with access to free 24 hour crisis support and suicide prevention services. lifeline.org.au
 - **Call:** 13 11 14 (available 24/7).
 - **Text:** Lifeline Text 0477 13 11 14 (available 24/7).
 - **Online Chat:** lifeline.org.au/crisis-chat (available 24/7).
- **Beyond Blue:** Free call 1300 22 46 36 or online chat at beyondblue.com.au (24/7) (including a free phone interpreting service and national relay service). Provides information and support to everyone in Australia to achieve their best possible mental health.
- **Link2home Crisis Accommodation (NSW):** Call 1800 152 152. A 24/7 service providing information and referrals for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, including urgent crisis accommodation.
- **MensLine Australia:** Call 1300 78 99 78. Free professional 24/7 phone and online counselling for men with concerns about mental health, relationships, anger management, family violence (using and experiencing), stress and suicidal thoughts. mensline.org.au
- **Mental Health Access Line:** A free state-based service connecting you with local mental health services.
 - **NSW** - call 1800 011 511. **QLD** - call 1300 642 255. **TAS** - call 1800 332 388. **ACT** - call 1800 629 354.
- **Salvation Army Assistance Line:** 9am-4pm Monday to Friday. Crisis line for those who are in need of material or financial assistance. salvationarmy.org.au/need-help/financial-assistance/
 - **NSW** - call 02 8775 7988. **QLD** - call 07 3001 6288. **TAS** - call 03 6208 1488. **ACT** - call 02 8775 7987.
- **St Vincent De Paul Family Assistance Hotline:** Call 13 18 12. For anyone experiencing financial hardship.