

Patient Information

Ear Wax Removal

INTRODUCTION

Ear wax is normal, and is produced in order to protect the skin of the ear canal from bacteria, water, insects etc. It is also a method for our ear to clean itself, as it is able to collect skin and dust particles. The wax will generally work its way out of the ear canal.

However in some cases it is possible for wax to build up in the ear, and this can be a common problem in hearing aid users as the ear mould can block the ear canal, meaning the wax cannot make its way out of the ear.

Excessive or occluding wax can result in difficulties with both hearing and the hearing aid. It can cause the following problems:

- Reduction in hearing
- A feeling of fullness in the ear
- The hearing aid may whistle
- The hearing aid may appear to no longer work

WHAT TO DO ABOUT THE WAX

You should NEVER poke anything into your ears in order to try to remove the wax; this includes cotton buds, hair pins or any other device. This can result in pushing the wax further down the ear or cause further problems.

GETTING THE WAX REMOVED

We advise that in the case of excessive wax that you see your GP for wax removal. To prepare for this we advise the following method to soften the wax:

- Using olive oil and a 'dropper' pipette, lie on your side and drop three drops of olive oil at body temperature into the ear canal.
- Allow the oil to soak into the wax and remain lying down for 2-3 minutes.
- Repeat the procedure on the opposite ear if necessary.
- Repeat this for about 3-4 weeks before your appointment with the GP for wax removal.

Eardrops are not suitable if you have a perforated eardrum, and have not seen your GP or ENT Doctor in the last 3 years.

If you are unable to have your ears syringed due to contraindications such as perforations or previous middle ear surgery, then you may need to be referred to ENT for wax removal.

This leaflet has been approved by Mr Chandrappa, ENT Consultant, Hinchingsbrooke Hospital.



If you require this leaflet in LARGE PRINT, please ask your audiologist, a member of reception, or contact the department

This Information leaflet has been reviewed and approved by the Audiology Patient Panel. If you would like to get involved, please leave your contact details with a member of the reception staff.

Document History

Authors: Audiology Department

Department: Audiology Department, Hinchingsbrooke Hospital, Hinchingsbrooke Park, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire, PE29 6NT

www.nwangliaft.nhs.uk/a-z-of-services/a/audiology/

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