

Patient Information - ear syringing

Earwax is properly known as cerumen.

Cerumen is a normal secretion designed to trap debris, therefore protecting the lining of the ear. It is also slightly acidic and protects the ear from infection. It is continuously secreted in the outer regions of the auditory canal by the ceruminous glands. The wax is gradually moved towards the entrance of the auditory canal by the self-cleaning mechanism of the skin and by the action of muscles used in chewing and talking. The colour, consistency and amount of earwax produced by individuals vary widely. Wax may appear to be dry and flaky, or crumbly consistency, honey coloured or dark brown and very hard when it may become quite firmly attached to the underlying skin.

However, some people experience problems, and ear irrigation is one way of removing excessive amounts of earwax.

Some of the common problems are: -

- Narrow ear canals. Dusty or dirty environment, people who work in areas where there is a lot of dust or dirt in the air sometimes finds that this combines with the cerumen in the ear to form a plug.
- Cleaning attempts. Using cotton buds, matchsticks and hair clips to try to clean out the ear canals is one of the most common causes of impacted wax. It causes the wax to be forced down the canal and form a hard dry plug against the eardrum. Matchsticks and hair clips can inflict considerable damage to the skin lining of the canal.
- Earplugs. The use of earplugs, often mandatory in some occupations, can have a similar effect to cotton buds.
- Hearing Aid moulds. They can interfere with the natural ability to shed dead skin and wax, and cause debris to build up in the canal.
- Habit. Some people become accustomed to attending regularly for ear irrigation, believing it is necessary to prevent them experiencing hearing loss.
- Age. Older people may have drier wax, and older men often develop more hairy ears.

Prior to having your ears irrigated you will be required to instil drops of olive oil three times a day for seven days. This will soften the wax in preparation for syringing. See below instructions on how eardrops should be instilled. Do not put cotton wool into your ears, as this will absorb the oil.

The recommendation is that olive oil should be used for this procedure.

The only reason for carrying out ear irrigation is when hearing is reduced due to wax impacted on the eardrum. Regular or routine irrigation is not recommended.

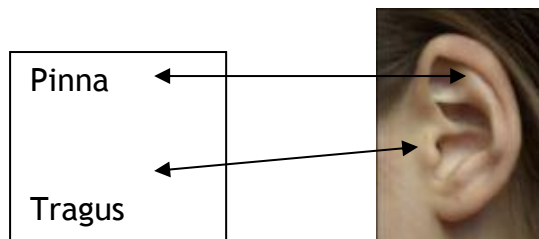
THE USE OF COTTON WOOL BUDS, MATCHSTICKS, HAIRPINS, PAPER CLIPS ETC TO REMOVE WAX IS NOT ADVISED

INSTILLATION OF EAR DROPS

In preparation for ear irrigation and to encourage normal wax expulsion from the outer ear

When using olive oil drops

- 1 Lie down on your side with the affected ear uppermost
- 2 Drop 2 or 3 drops of oil (at room temperature) into the ear canal and massage the tragus, just in front of the ear and pull the pinna backwards and upwards. This enables the oil to run down the ear canal.



- 3 Stay lying down for 5 minutes and then wipe away any excess oil.
- 4 Do not leave cotton wool at the entrance to the ear
- 5 Repeat the procedure with the opposite ear if necessary.
- 6 Prior to irrigation, insert the drops three times a day for at least 7 days

Your appointment for ear syringing is on:

| | |
|--------------|--|
| Day | |
| Date | |
| Time | |
| Nurse | |

If you are unable to attend, please cancel your appointment in good time so that we can offer it to another patient.