



Patient Information Leaflet



EAR WAX

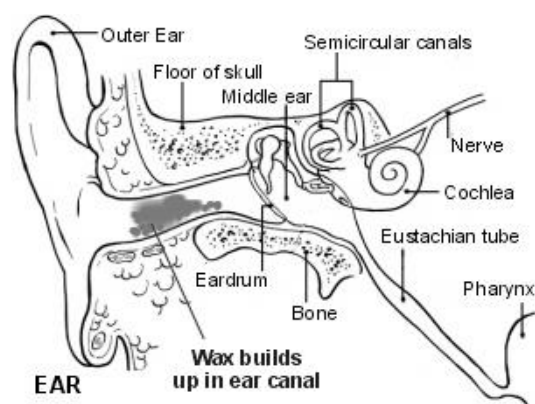
Monkseaton Medical Centre and Bridge Medical are committed to providing best practice and high-quality medical care. Ear syringing is no longer considered to be 1st line treatment for the clearing of ear wax and thus is not recommended for routine use by the NHS in General Practice. It is for this reason, to provide the best evidenced medical care, that we do not offer routine ear syringing as a first line treatment.

Points to remember:

- Ear wax is normal, and it provided protection for your ears
- The movement of your jaw whilst eating and talking helps to move the wax along the canal.
- A plug of earwax in not a serious problem. You only need to remove earwax if it is causing symptoms such as dulled hearing or when fitting a hearing aid

What makes ear wax worse:

- The amount of wax produced varies from person to person
- Some people produce excess wax, and this can block the ear
- Wearing a hearing aid, ear plugs, or headphone can interfere with wax expulsion
- Narrow and/or hairy ear canals
- Dry skin in people who suffer with eczema and psoriasis



What should you NOT do?

- Do not use cotton bud. This forces the wax deeper and can cause damage and infection
- If your ears are itchy do not scratch or rub them with your fingernails or any other objects
- **Do not use anything smaller than you elbow in your ear!**

What Helps?

- Try and keep your ears dry. When washing your hair, showering, or swimming putting some Vaseline around the inner part of your ear can help
- Do not put you your head under the water when bathing
- You may also benefit from regular use of ear drops

Using ear drops:

- Ear drops alone will clear a plug of earwax in most cases. Put 2 or 3 drops of ordinary olive oil down the ear using a 'dropper' 2 or 3 times a day for 2-3 weeks. This softens the wax so that it then runs out of its accord without harming the ear. You can continue for any length of time, but 3 weeks is usually enough.
- If olive oil does not work, you can buy sodium bicarbonate drops from your local pharmacy
- However, you can keep using ear drops to soften the wax. If you are prone to repeated wax build-up you can continue to use olive oil drops twice a week to prevent recurrence
- **Do not use any ear drops if you have a hole in your eardrum (called a perforated eardrum)**

How to best use ear drops

- Warm the drops to room temperature before using them
- Pour a few drops in the affected ear
- Lie with the affected ear uppermost when putting in drops
- Stay like this for about 10 minutes to allow the drops to soak into the earwax

If ear drops alone don't work you can syringe your own ears

There are many over-the counter kits available from your local pharmacy, supermarket or online (search ear wax bulb syringe)

These specially designed ear syringes are designed to create enough pressure to clear the wax out without causing damage



When to seek help

- Pain in ear
- Discharge or bleeding from the ear
- Sudden deafness or significantly reduced hearing
- Dizziness
- Foreign bodies (you will be advised to attend A&E)

If things are not improving after trying the ear wax bulb syringe

- Please book a face-to-face appointment with our health care assistant to check your ears
- Once checked and if ear syringing is needed, we can check the Out of Hours Service for availability as ear syringing is NOT offered at the surgery. (Sometimes there can be a wait for these appointments)
- You can also go to a private provider to have this done. Several opticians who offer hearing test services offer this service (you will have to research where this service is available yourself as your GP surgery is not allowed to make recommendations) and they will also advise you of the cost