



12 June 2019

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## Ear bulb syringing

As you may be aware we are looking to empower patients regarding self-care for ear wax using ear bulb syringes. This has been very successfully piloted in several locations across Northumberland and North Tyneside with high patient satisfaction, reductions in nurse syringing appointments and in consultations with GPs regarding syringing. Consequently we plan to roll this out across both areas.

Patients who have hearing impairment where the cause is unknown will still need to see a clinician, but we hope expanding this intervention will free up time in both primary care and in the community as well as speeding things up for patients too.

Ear bulb syringing is very much the norm for patients in Europe with ear wax issues and it is hoped that it will be a solution for many local patients, but clearly some will still require traditional ear syringing

Those who should not attempt ear bulb syringing is defined in a [patient leaflet](#) and includes:

- Pain in the ear
- A history of eardrum perforation in the affected ear
- A recent history of an ear infection in the affected ear
- Symptoms of infection in the ear
- If you only have one hearing ear which is the affected ear
- Previous ear surgery on the affected ear

Where appropriate, patients will be given the leaflet and community pharmacies have been asked, through the Local Pharmaceutical Committee to stock ear bulb syringes, these are cheap and re-usable by the patient. To further help the pilot we have purchased a number of ear bulb syringes that community staff will

give to patients who have regular ear syringing appointments.

We will continue to monitor this. Please contact Alistair Blair, GP medical director, if you have any questions - [alistair.blair@northumbria.nhs.uk](mailto:alistair.blair@northumbria.nhs.uk).

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