



GUIDELINES FOR EAR SYRINGING

Small amounts of ear wax are made all the time and form a protective coating to the skin in the ear canal. A plug of wax is not a serious problem and only needs removing if it is causing symptoms such as dulled hearing.

Removing plugs of ear wax:

Ear drops will often clear a plug of wax.

Ear syringing may be required **ONLY** if ear drops do not work.

However, ear syringing **IS A LAST RESORT.**

Ear drops

Ear drops to soften wax are available from pharmacies, (e.g. sodium bicarbonate, almond oil or olive oil ear drops). A few drops of the oil, and inserted into the ear canal will soften the wax and help to break it up. You will need to tilt your head or lie on one side for at least 10 minutes after inserting the drops. The drops **MUST** be inserted 2-3 times a day for at least **2 weeks**. If you cannot get help to instil the drops, it might be easier to use a dropper (available from a pharmacy).

What NOT to do

- Do not try to clean the canal with cotton buds etc. This has the effect of pushing the wax deeper inside.
- Do not use cotton wool in the ears after you have applied the drops as this stimulates the ears to produce more wax.

Preventing the build up of wax

Some people are prone to developing wax plugs. This may be prevented by putting some wax softening drops in each ear once or twice a week.

Ear syringing

If you have a build-up of wax and have used oil regularly for a minimum of ten days and it has not improved your dulled hearing, please make an appointment with the nurse for ear syringing. Syringing is usually painless. Lukewarm water is squirted into the ear canal to dislodge the wax. Some people feel dizzy after ear syringing but this quickly settles. Occasionally you may develop an inflammation in the canal following syringing, causing itching and discomfort. This can be treated with ear drops available on prescription.

Ear syringing may not be advised if you have certain ear problems, in particular recurring infections or perforation. This will be assessed by the nurse at your appointment.

The appointment with the nurse will just be for ear syringing. If you need other tests carried out (e.g. blood pressure or blood tests), you will need to advise the receptionist at the time of booking the appointment so that extra time can be allowed.