



Applying oil to soften ear wax

If you have hard wax in your ears, it is important that it is softened before removal. You can do this by applying vegetable oil- olive oil or almond oil at room temperature from a dropper.(Droppers are available from local chemist).

Danger – do not use almond oil if you have a nut allergy

1. Lay on the bed on the side not being treated.
2. Apply approx 5 drops of oil at room temperature into the ear.
3. If possible stay on your side for at least **10 minutes.**
4. If both ears require removal of wax repeat above steps to the other ear.
5. Do not put cotton wool or tissue at the entrance of the ear.
6. Repeat the above at least twice a day
7. Use the drops for 7-10 days continuously prior to having ears syringed, including the morning of your appointment.

EAR CARE

Supporting Information

The ear cleans itself and cotton buds should **NOT** be used to try to clear wax because they are likely to push wax back against the ear drum and make the problem worse. Ear wax is a normal substance that protects the ear canal. The quantity produced varies greatly between different people. Earwax only needs to be removed if it causes symptoms such as discomfort or hearing loss. It may also need to be removed before having a hearing test or fitting of a hearing aid.

Impacted earwax can be treated with ear drops used to soften the wax and this should be tried before any other treatment.

In Lancashire Care Foundation Trust the drops preferred are **Olive Oil**, used as directed overleaf.

Wax may also be removed by a suitably qualified practitioner within the community treatment rooms by a method called “irrigation”. This involves using an electronic device to gently flow water into the ear in an attempt to remove the **softened** wax. This process should not cause any pain or discomfort. **It is not suitable to be used on anybody who has, or has had:**

- Previous problem with ear irrigation, for example pain or perforation.
- perforation/hole of the ear drum –present or suspected
- grommets

- history of middle ear infection in the past 6 weeks,
- Acute Otitis externa or chronic middle ear disease,
- cleft palate, repaired or not,
- or any patient who may be confused agitated or unable to co-operate.

The risks of ear irrigation- There are some risks of ear irrigation, although these are small. They include:

- bleeding from the ear,
- perforation/hole in ear drum,
- otitis externa (infection of ear canal)
- disturbance in balance.

The benefits of ear irrigation- You may find after you have had your ears irrigated that your hearing has improved and you should feel relief from any discomfort caused from excess or impacted ear wax.

The alternatives to ear irrigation- You should always try ear drops before you have ear irrigation, as discussed at the beginning of this leaflet. An ear curette may be used to hook out wax and micro suction can also be used. These treatments are currently not available at any of the community treatment rooms but following assessment you may be offered referral to a clinic /hospital which offers this service.