



Ear Care Clinic

Information for patients

The aim of this leaflet is to give you advice about:

- Ear wax
- What can you do if wax builds up and causes problems?
- Ear drops and how to get them into your ear
- Removal of ear wax by microsuction
- General advice about looking after your ears
- Who to contact for appointments

Ear wax is produced inside your ears to keep them clean and free from germs. It usually passes out of the ears harmlessly, but sometimes too much can build up and block the ears. A build-up of earwax is a common problem that can often be treated using eardrops bought from a pharmacy.

What causes earwax to build up?

Some people regularly get blocked ears because they naturally produce a lot of earwax.

Other factors that can increase the risk of too much wax include:

- Producing naturally hard or dry earwax
- Having narrow or hairy ear canals (the tube between the opening of the ear and the eardrum)
- Being elderly – as earwax becomes drier with age
- Bony growths in the outer part of the ear canal
- Earwax can also block your ear if you frequently insert objects into your ear canal such as cotton wool buds, ear plugs or hearing aids

It is important to keep your ears dry when you are washing your hair, showering, bathing or swimming. This can be done by inserting ear plugs or cotton wool coated in petroleum jelly into the outside of the ear canal(s) to act as a protective seal.

In the unlikely event that you develop pain, dizziness, reduced hearing or discharge from your ear after the procedure, consult with your GP as soon as possible.

If wax is being removed due to hearing loss and good hearing is not restored, please consult your GP who may consider referral to an audiologist.

When is ear irrigation not advised?

Please tell the nurse if you have had any of the following as this may mean you cannot have ear irrigation.

- Complications following this procedure in the past
- Ear surgery in the past (apart from grommets that have come out at least 18 months previously and you have been discharged from the hospital ear department)
- A cleft palate (even if it has been repaired)
- An ear infection or have had an ear infection in the previous six weeks
- Recurring infections of the ear canal
- Have or have had a perforated ear drum
- You are currently taking Warfarin and INR out with target range

General advice about looking after your ears

x **Do not** use cotton wool buds or any other object to clean your ears. This will push the wax or dirt further into the ear, or scratch or damage the ear canal. The ear cleans itself and flakes of wax will fall out now and then.

x **Do not** use corners of towels or cotton wool buds to dry your ear canal. They will dry naturally.

To book an appointment:

Arbroath Infirmary Telephone: 01241 822527	Links Health Centre Telephone: 01674 817186
---	--

Ear Care Clinics are held in the following areas:

Arbroath Infirmary – Outpatient Department

Carnoustie Health Centre

Monifieth Health Centre

Montrose – Outpatient Department, Links Health centre

Stracathro Hospital – Outpatient Department

Whitehills Health and Community Care Centre – Outpatient Department

This leaflet has been developed using current medical and nursing literature. Patients, doctors and nurses were involved in the development of the leaflet.

Revised: 12/2023 Review: 12/2025 LN0311

This leaflet can be made available in other languages and formats on request
Speak to the nurse looking after you to arrange this