

## SELF-TREATMENT OF EXCESSIVE EAR WAX

Ear wax is a buildup of cerumen, dead skin cells, sweat and hair. It is a completely normal physiological substance designed to protect the delicate ear canal and quantities can vary from one person to the next. Ear wax is only a problem if it becomes hard, dry and impacted. Indications for removal include hearing loss, discomfort / pain and Tinnitus.

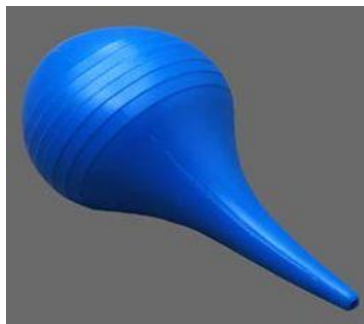
### Management of Problematic Ear Wax

**First line of treatment:** Ear drops are the first line of treatment to soften the ear wax. Olive oil is gentle and effective and should be used for 5-10 days twice daily. Sodium Bicarbonate can also be used. **(Please always refer to the manufacturer's instruction leaflet).** Please be aware that drops should **not** be used if you have a history of a perforated ear drum, grommets or a recent ear infection.

**Second line of treatment:** If the symptoms persist despite the use of ear drops please make an appointment for an ear assessment with one of our Practice Nurses, who can advise you about your suitability for **ear irrigation**.

**Self-irrigation** is a safe method of self-management of ear wax (ref Coppin R Wicke D Little P 2011 "trial of ear bulbs for management of ear wax in primary care").

**Traditional ear syringing:** For a number of reasons our trained Nurses carry out traditional ear syringing less frequently. Park Lane Surgery's clinical team advise self-management where possible and suitable with the use of an **EAR BULB SYRINGE** which can be purchased in local Chemists for a few pounds. Alternatively, a complete ear wax kit (including drops and the ear bulb) costs approximately £8-£10.





## **How to use an EAR BULB SYRINGE**

(Please always refer to the manufacturer's instruction leaflet)

1. First soften the wax with olive oil, twice daily 5-10 days prior to usage.
2. Use a bowl of warm water of comfortable temperature, not too hot or too cold.
3. Prepare the syringe by squirting water in / out of it a few times.
4. Gently pull your outer ear "up and out" to help straighten out the canal, which will allow better access for the water.
5. Tilt your head to one side and gently squirt one or more bulb syringes of water into your ear. This can be done in the bath or shower.
6. Allow the water to remain in your ear for approx. 1 minute, then gently tilt your head in the opposite direction and wiggle your outer ear. You should see discoloured water coming out, which has oil, water and wax in it. This is the desired result. Repeat if needed.
7. Repeat on your other ear if needed. You may also find more than one flushing per ear may be required to rid yourself of ear wax.
8. Dry your ear(s) to complete the procedure.

## **Who should NOT use this method?**

- People who have a hole in their ear drum (perforation) should not use this method.
- If your ears are painful or have fluid coming out of them you should speak to one of our trained Nurses. Do not use this method.

If you have any queries, please contact the surgery to request advice from a member of our Nurse Team [by clicking on this link](#), or call reception who can place the request for you

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