

HOW TO USE EAR DROPS:

- Warm the drops to room temperature
- Lie on your side with the affected ear to the ceiling.
- Place 1-2 drops into the entrance of the canal
- Lie in that position for 5 minutes to aid absorption
- Wipe any excess drops away.
- Use 3-4 times a day

EAR SYRINGING:

- Can help alleviate severe discomfort or hearing loss due to wax if drops have failed.
- Is an invasive procedure
- Is not a routine treatment of wax
- There is a risk of perforation of the ear drum, infection, pain, tinnitus and failure to remove wax.
- The nurses can give you more information when you see them

EARWAX



Keeping your ears
healthy

DID YOU KNOW?

EAR WAX IS GOOD FOR YOU!

Ear wax is a natural secretion of fats and oils produced in the ear. Small amounts are made in the ear and move naturally out of the ear.

Wax has several jobs:

- It lubricates the ear, stopping it feel dry and itchy
- It protects the ear by trapping dust and other particles
- It is slightly acidic and so protects against bacteria and fungi

Ideally, ears should never need to be cleaned as the body is able to do this for itself.

However, for a very small number of people earwax can be bothersome when it builds up.

When wax builds up it can cause hearing loss and discomfort in some people. However this is not a serious medical problem.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO REMOVE WAX?

Firstly, DO NOT try to remove it by using cotton tips or placing anything inside the ear. This may push the wax further in and stop it coming out naturally.

There are several drops which can be used to clear a plug of wax, including:

- Olive oil
- Sodium bicarbonate drops

These can be bought from a pharmacy.

These soften the wax so that it can move out of the ear easier

Drops must be used 3-4 times a day for 2-3 weeks for full effect.

(See 'How to Use Ear Drops' for directions)

If wax is a recurrent problem it is possible to use drops once a week on an ongoing basis.

WHEN SHOULD I SEE A DOCTOR ABOUT EARWAX?

If you have used 2-3 weeks of drops and you are still suffering from discomfort or hearing loss

If you use ear drops and they cause pain stop them immediately and see a doctor.

If there is a possibility of perforation or infection please see a doctor before using eardrops. This means that you have severe pain, a previous hole in the ear drum or a runny or white discharge coming from the ear.

If you are having persistent problems with wax the doctor may require you to change drops or, rarely, have the wax removed by irrigation or suction.