

Earwax Treatment

Community Paediatric Audiology Service



Earwax is natural and helps to keep the ear clean.

Earwax should not be removed unless under the guidance of a health professional.

Earwax only needs to be removed if it causes pain, blocks hearing or if a professional needs to see the eardrum.

If earwax is blocking hearing, you may be asked to have your, or your child's, hearing re-tested after treatment.

Ear drops

Often, softening the earwax so that it can come out on its own is enough.

Olive oil is cheap and easy to use. It can be bought from a chemist along with a dropper bottle. Follow the instructions given to you by the doctor or chemist. If there are no instructions then there are some below.

How to Use

1. Have drops at room temperature
2. Lie down with the ear needing treatment facing up
3. Put 3 to 4 drops carefully into the ear

Wait a few minutes before standing or treating the other ear. This can be done up to 3 to 4 times a day. If using with children, it is often best to wait until they have gone to sleep.

What next?

You should see your GP or Practice Nurse after a week or two. They can tell you if the treatment is working. If it isn't, they may recommend changing ear drops.

Other ear drops include:

Sodium bicarbonate solution

Sodium chloride solution

Non-prescription drops from the chemist

These drops can be irritating to the skin in the ear. They may also 'fizz' which can worry young children. Please seek advice before using these drops.

What else can be done?

If ear drops do not work then the ear can be:

- Syringed (washed out professionally)
- Microsuctioned (suctioned out professionally)
- Picked out by a professional with special equipment

Young children should NEVER have their ears syringed unless under the care of an Ear Specialist.

If any of the above needs to happen your GP or Practice Nurse will advise you. There is a specialist Aural Care Clinic at Addenbrooke's Hospital where you may be referred.

Do NOT use 'Earwax Candles' to clear earwax. They do not work and can be dangerous.

Attempting to remove earwax in any other way is dangerous and can make the problem worse.

If you have any questions, please contact your Hearing Department, your GP, your Child and Family Nurse or the Practice Nurse for further information.

For further information about this service contact:

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The Peacock Centre
Brookfield's Hospital
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Cambridge CB1 3DF

Tel: 01223 218066

If you require this information in a different format such as in large print or on audio tape, or in a different language please contact the service on the details above.

If you have any compliments about this service or suggestions for improvements, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service on 0300 131 1000 (charges may apply depending on your network) or email: ccs-tr.pals@nhs.net.

For free, confidential health advice and information 24 hours a day, 365 days a year please contact NHS 111.