

Blocked ears (wax) self-care guidelines for patients

Earwax

Earwax is a normal build-up of dead cells, hair and natural wax which forms a protective coating on the skin in the ear canal. The quantity of earwax produced varies greatly from person to person.

You only need to remove earwax if it is causing symptoms such as dulled hearing or when fitting a hearing aid.

How to remove Ear wax

Note: If you think you have ear wax, do not try to clean the ear canal with cotton wool buds. This can make things worse, as you will push some earwax deeper inside. It may also cause an ear infection.

Ear drops

Put 2 or 3 drops of ordinary olive oil down the ear 2 or 3 times a day for 2-3 weeks.. You can continue for any length of time, but 3 weeks is usually enough.

If you are prone to repeated wax built up you can continue to use olive oil drops twice a week to prevent recurrence.

If olive oil does not work you can buy sodium bicarbonate drops from pharmacies.

How to use ear drops

1. Pour a few drops into the affected ear
2. Lie with the affected ear uppermost when putting in drops
3. Stay like this for 10 minutes to allow the drops to soak into the earwax.

Bulb Syringing

Bulb syringing is a safe, alternate way to remove ear wax. Bulb syringes can be easily purchased from a pharmacy and allow you to clear your ears from wax in your own home.



If your ears are painful or have fluid coming out of them, or if you have a hole in your ear drum (perforation) or have recently had surgery on your ear you should see doctor or nurse and don't use this method.

The Otex Combi Pack is available over the counter and is useful for the removal of hard wax

Instructions for Bulb Syringing using the Otex Combi pack

Below treatment is for adults and children over the age of 12:

- 1 Wash your hands
- 2 Simply tilt head and squeeze up to 5 drops into the ear, leave for a few minutes then wipe away any surplus with a tissue.
- 3 This procedure should be repeated once or twice daily while your symptoms clear.
- 4 Treatment usually takes 3-4 days, after which you should notice a reduction in ear discomfort.
- 5 After using the ear drops for 3 to 4 days, gently cleanse the ear with warm water by rinsing with the easy-to-use bulb syringe.

If, after 3 weeks or more, you are still deaf or experiencing pain in your ear, you will need to make an appointment with a doctor or nurse to decide what should be done.