

# Ear Syringing

*If there is a build-up of wax in your ear (s) please read this self-help guide as you may not need an appointment.*

## **What Is Ear Wax?**

Ear wax is normal and is produced to form a protective coating over the skin in the ear canal. Ears are normally self-cleaning, the movement of the jaw whilst eating and talking helps to move wax along the canal, where it will usually fall out naturally without you noticing.

## **Why Is My Ear Blocked With Wax?**

The amount of ear wax produced varies from person to person; some people produce excessive amounts which can lead to a blockage in the ear canal.

You are more likely to develop blockages of wax in the canal if you:

- Use cotton buds to clean the ear as it pushes the wax deeper into the canal
- Wear a hearing aid, ear plugs or use in-ear speakers for iPods or similar devices – as these can all interfere with the natural process of wax expulsion.
- Have abnormally narrow or hairy ear canals.
- Are elderly – because the ear wax produced is drier and harder
- Have a dry skin problems, such as eczema or psoriasis

## **Advice to Help Manage and Prevent Wax Blockage**

Ear wax only becomes a problem if it causes deafness, discomfort or if your health professional requires a clear view of your ear drum.

If you experience any of the following, you should seek advice from your GP:

- Pain
- Discharge or bleeding from the ear
- Sudden deafness or buzzing
- Foreign bodies in the ear
- Dizziness

If you do not experience any of the following, we recommend you manage the blockage yourself by:

**Olive Oil Drops**; *the following needs to be done 2-3 times daily for 14 days*

- Lie on your side with the affected ear uppermost
- Pull the outer ear gently backwards and upwards to straighten the ear canal
- Put 2-3 drops of olive oil into the affected ear(s) and gently massage just in front of the ear.
- Stay lying on your side to allow the wax to soak in for around 10 minutes.
- Afterwards wipe away any excess oil but do not plug your ear with cotton wool as this simply absorbs the oil.

In most cases, after 14 days, the wax will have softened sufficiently to encourage the wax to come out further without further intervention. However if you feel your hearing is still impaired, please make an appointment with the practice nurse for further guidance.

**Alternatively**, there are now over the counter kits available from pharmacies. For example olive oil sprays can be purchased and applied to the affected ear(s)

**Ear syringing- is only usually considered if the above recommendations are unsuccessful. Ear wax needs to be softened as above for 10-14 days before attempting to syringe.**

**YOU WILL NEED AN APPOINTMENT FOR ASSESMENT, WITH A PRACTICE NURSE, PRIOR TO EAR SYRINGING.**