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Ear wax blockage

Ear wax blockage occurs when ear wax (cerumen) accumulates in your ear or becomes too hard to wash away naturally.

Ear wax is a helpful and natural part of your body's defences. It cleans, lubricates and protects your ear canal by trapping dirt and slowing the growth of bacteria.

Causes of ear wax blockage

Ear wax blockages commonly occur when people try to clean their ears on their own by using cotton swabs/buds or other items in their ears. This results in the wax being pushed deeper in to the ear canal and compacting it rather than removing it.

Symptoms of ear wax blockage

- Earache
- Feeling of fullness in the affected ear
- Ringing or noises in the ear (tinnitus)
- Decreased hearing in the affected ear
- Dizziness or cough

Treatment

These measures are only suitable for people who have never had a hole/perforation of the ear drum or if they have never had ear surgery or grommets.

1. Soften the wax – use an eye dropper to apply a few drops twice daily into the affected ear.
 - Olive oil drops
 - Cerumol drops
 - Sodium bicarbonate drops(All available from your local pharmacy)

This may take from 5-10 days depending on the amount of ear wax present.

2. Use warm water – after 5 days of wax softening. Use a wax removal syringe (see diagram – AcuLife Ear Wax Removal Syringe, available on Amazon.com or from your local pharmacy) to gently squirt warm water into ear canal. Follow the instructions on the ear wax removal syringe. When finished irrigating tip your head to the side to let water drain naturally.



3. Dry your ear canal/outer ear gently with a clean towel – do not attempt to use cotton buds/picks in your ear canal.

You may need to repeat this procedure a few times before the ear wax is fully cleared.

DO NOT TRY TO DIG OUT EAR WAX AS YOU MAY FURTHER IMPACT THE WAX AND MAY CAUSE INCREASED PAIN AND OTHER SYMPTOMS.

DO NOT ATTEMPT SELF-CARE IF YOU HAVE EVER HAD ANY EAR SURGERY, ANY EAR DRUM PERFORATION, HAVE GROMMETS OR ARE 'UNDER 18'. YOU MAY REQUIRE REFERRAL FOR SUCTION REMOVAL OF WAX IN THESE CASES.

If your symptoms persist after 2 weeks please book in to see a clinician