

Warning:

- If you have ever had ear surgery or drum perforation, please discuss this with your own GP before starting any treatment for wax.
- If you are deaf and you don't know why you should see your practice doctor or nurse.
- If you have or suspect you have any kind of ear problem other than wax you should NOT put anything down the ear except after medical advice.

Please note:

Very occasionally ear syringing and irrigation can cause injury to the ears, ranging from minor infection, acute and chronic tinnitus (ringing in the ears), to perforation of the ear drum and deafness. This is why it should only be offered after discussion with your doctor or nurse.

General ear care advice

Cleaning your ears

Do not try to clean the ear canal with cotton buds, etc. This can make things worse as you will push some wax deeper inside. It may also cause an ear infection. Let the ear 'clean itself'.

Ongoing wax problems

If you have repeated build-up of wax you can help this by putting olive oil drops into the ear twice a week. It is very unlikely you will need regular ear syringing or irrigation as this can stimulate the production of more wax.

Ear pain

Ear wax does not cause pain, only decreased hearing. If you have ear pain persisting for more than 48 hours on regular pain-killers please see your doctor or the nurse.

Other ear problems

If you have ear problems such as dry skin, dermatitis or eczema, keeping your ears dry when showering or bathing will help. You can do this by using ear plugs or a piece of cotton wool smeared with Vaseline.



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Advice about ear wax causing blocked ears and hearing loss.

For more information
or advice please contact your
practice nurse or doctor.

If you have a problem with blocked ears

they will not always need to be syringed or washed out (irrigation).

One of the main causes of hearing loss or blocked ears is a build up of wax.

Ear wax is a natural product of the body and it is normal to have within the ear canal. It provides protection against ear infection.

Ears are designed to be self cleaning, but occasionally they can get blocked with wax and cause deafness.

This leaflet explains **effective and safe** treatment for blocked ears caused by wax, and will reduce the need for ear syringing and irrigation.

If you **know** you have a wax problem causing deafness and that your ear is healthy you can start the treatment for yourself as follows:

- You need to put 2 drops of ordinary room temperature olive oil down the ear **twice a day for 14 days**. We recommend olive oil only. We do **NOT** recommend specially formulated preparations that can be purchased which are not olive oil. This is because they can irritate healthy ears, thus producing more wax.
- You can buy a pipette from your local chemist to help insert the olive oil into the affected ear(s).

Olive oil softens the wax so that it runs out on its own accord. It does not harm the ear. You can continue for any length of time but 14 days is usually enough.

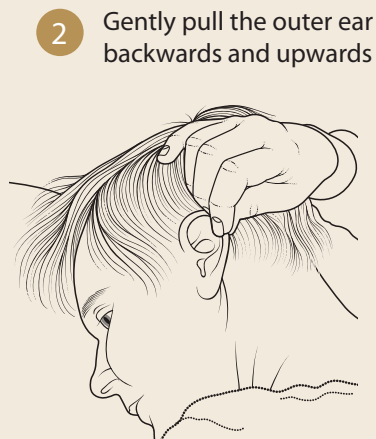
Surprisingly you will not necessarily see wax come out. It often seems to come out unnoticed.

If, after 14 days you are still deaf or have blocked ears, you will need to make an appointment with your practice nurse or doctor to decide whether syringing or irrigation is appropriate.

How to insert the olive oil drops



- 1 Lie down on your side with the affected ear upwards.

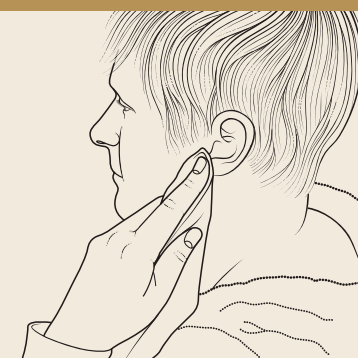


- 2 Gently pull the outer ear backwards and upwards



- 3 Using the dropper, drop 2 drops of room temperature olive oil into the ear canal. Then gently massage the area in front of the ear.

- 4 Stay lying down for ten minutes to allow absorption of the oil into the wax.



- 5 Wipe away any excess oil that runs out of the ear afterwards. Repeat with the other ear if needed.