

Patient information leaflet

Ear syringing – an alternative

You are being given this leaflet after your ear syringing today to introduce a new way of managing ear wax in the future. Whilst you have attended for ear syringing before, recent evidence suggests that syringing may not be as safe as we thought. Even though syringing is undertaken by trained staff, we are seeing an increased number of patients with inflamed and infected ear canals. As a result of this, we have been researching other options.

Only very rarely should syringing be necessary. The application of ear drops should disperse excessive wax and regular application of drops will prevent the buildup of wax. The drops are inexpensive to buy from a chemist or pharmacy or indeed some large supermarkets but unfortunately we are unable to provide these on prescription. Here is what to do:

How to manage and disperse the buildup of ear wax

In most cases the application of ear drops will disperse the buildup of wax.

Drops should be used three times a day for at least 5-10 days. Cotton-buds or ear candles should not be used as these can do real damage to the ear canal and drum.

Once the ears are clear of wax, it can be helpful to continue to use the drops twice a week to help keep them clear.

If during the application of the drops you continue to suffer from hearing loss or if you have other ear symptoms such as unpleasant discharge or pain, you should see a doctor or nurse.

How to use ear drops

- Use olive oil, sodium bicarbonate ear drops or other branded products that are available for dispersing ear wax. These are available from chemists or pharmacies and the Pharmacist can explain the different types. Brand names you may have heard of include Earex, Cerumol and Otex (there are others).
- The drops should be at room temperature before use.
- Lay on your side with the affected ear uppermost and place three to five drops into the ear canal. Let the drops soak in for at least 5 minutes.
- You can use some cotton wool (dampened with water or Vaseline) placed at the entrance to the canal to stop drops running out as you get up afterwards.
- Repeat three times a day to the affected ear until the wax has gone and your hearing improves.

If this does not work after 2 weeks and your ears are still blocked with ear wax, then please contact the surgery and book an appointment with a **Practice Nurse or our Nurse Practitioner** to review your ears. They will discuss with you the next options.