Patient Information Leaflet
The treatment of ear wax using drops

The ear
The ear canal is a 3cm tunnel ending at the eardrum. The sides of the tunnel are covered with skin and have small glands which produce wax. The wax is important to waterproof and protect the skin of the tunnel. Usually, ears are self-cleaning and the excess wax works itself out. Occasionally, a large build-up of wax can cause some temporary loss of hearing.

How to manage and disperse thee 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 to10 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 ear to stop the 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 your hearing does not improve after applying the drops for 2 weeks, then please make an appointment with the **Practice Nurse** or **Nurse Practitioner** who will review the situation and consider other options for the removal of wax.