



Oiling ear prior to syringing- Patient Information

What is ear wax?

Ear wax forms a protective coating of the skin in the ear canal. Small amounts are made all the time. Flakes or crusts of wax break off and fall out of the ear from time to time.

The quantity of ear wax made varies greatly from person to person. Plugs of wax form in some people. This may cause a feeling of fullness and dulled hearing. A doctor or nurse can look into the ear canal and confirm a plug of wax has formed. A plug of wax is not a serious problem, more a nuisance. You only need to remove wax if it is causing symptoms such as dulled hearing, itch, or discomfort.

Note: do not try to clean the ear canal with cotton wool 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'.

Ear syringing

This may be needed if ear drops do not work. Syringing will usually clear wax. But, it will usually only work if the plug of wax has been softened. **Therefore, use oil to soften wax 1-2 times a day for 4 weeks prior to syringing, and book an appointment before starting the following:**

1. Warm the oil (to body temperature) – cooking oil; baby oil or olive oil – it is not necessary to purchase expensive special drops from the chemist which some people can be sensitive to.
2. Use a pipette or a spoon- fill the blocked ear with oil of choice. (It is amazing how much oil is needed!) This is easier to do if you lay your head on a table or work surface, and someone else could assist you and put the oil in the ear.
3. You must lie there for 5 minutes (this is a long time, so please time it) to enable the oil to penetrate the wax.
4. It is then possible to dip a small piece of cotton wool into the oil and place it in the ear. (The most common mistake people make is they only use 3- 4 drops and put cotton wool in straight afterwards- the cotton wool absorbs the oil- not the wax)
5. If both ears are to be done, do one ear in the morning and the other in the evening.
6. Done correctly for a minimum of 14 days it should be a simple and painless procedure to remove the wax. Occasionally the process may need to be repeated depending on the quantity of ear wax but the practitioner will advise you of this

The procedure can at times cause the patient some dampness around the neck so if you wish to bring your own towel then please do.