

## TREATMENT OF EAR WAX

Ear wax is normal; some people make more of it than others. It has natural antiseptic properties and prevents the skin in the ear canal from drying out and suffering from inflammatory skin conditions such as eczema and dermatitis. Ears are self-cleaning, the movement of your jaw whilst eating and talking moves the wax along the canal.

### **When is it necessary to remove ear-wax?**

Sometimes you may find your ear is blocked with wax and you can't hear. If this is a problem softening the ear wax is likely to assist. Your pharmacist can give advice.

### **\*When to seek medical advice:**

If you are experiencing any of the following symptoms:

- Pain in the ear
- Discharge or bleeding from the ear
- Sudden deafness
- Dizziness
- Foreign bodies in the ear (you may be advised to attend a walk in centre / A&E)

### **To soften ear wax use the following:**

- 2 or 3 drops of ordinary **olive oil** down the ear 2 or 3 times a day for **3 weeks** **OR**
- 2 - 3 Softening drops (these include sodium bicarbonate) available from the Pharmacy 2 times a day for **3 weeks**.

1. Lie on your side with the affected ear uppermost
2. Pull the outer ear gently backwards and upwards to straighten the ear canal
3. Put 2-3 drops of the softener into the affected ear(s) and gently massage just in front of the ear
4. Stay lying on your side for 10 minutes to allow the wax to soak up the oil
5. Afterwards, wipe away any excess liquid but do not plug your ear with cotton wool as this simply absorbs the liquid
6. Your hearing problem may initially worsen after first starting to use the drops; this is why you are advised to concentrate on treating one ear at a time if both ears are blocked with wax.

**In most cases, the wax will have softened sufficiently to encourage the wax to come out without further intervention**

**Please note that we no longer offer ear syringing.** If you have tried the softening method of removal of ear wax for **3 weeks** and still have problems, please make a 5 minute appointment with our Assistant Nurse Practitioner Nicky, who will assess your ears. If wax is impacted and you have tried 3 weeks of softening, then manual removal may be indicated. If this is the case we may refer you to the Ear, Nose & Throat (ENT) Department for microsuction. (*Microsuction is the advanced technique in ear wax removal. It is considered to be far safer, quicker and a more comfortable alternative to ear syringing.*)

If you wish to have your ears assessed for wax removal privately, there are a variety of private health care providers. We do not recommend providers but are aware that there are private ear clinics:-

- Drayton Medical Services 02392 310151
- Clean Ear Clinic, Emsworth 02392985445
- Hearing Care Centre, Chichester 01243 774536
- Robson's Opticians 01243 732653