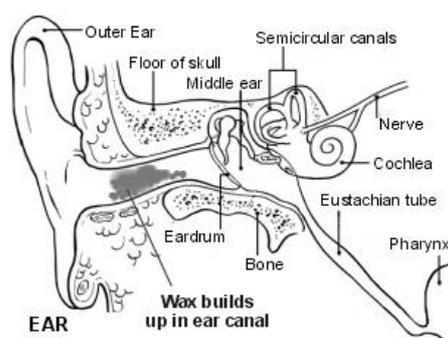


Ear Irrigation/Ear Care.

If there is a build of wax in your ear(s) please read this self-care guide as you may not need an appointment.

What is earwax ? Earwax is a build up of dead cells, hair, foreign material e.g. dust and cerumen, the natural wax produced by glands in the ear. It forms a protective coating of the skin in the ear canal. Small amounts are made all the time.



Ears are normally self-cleaning, the movement of your jaw while eating and talking helps to move the wax along the canal where it will usually fall out without you noticing.

Why is my ear blocked with wax ?

The quantity of earwax made varies greatly from person to person, some people produce large amounts, which can form plugs and lead to a blockage in the ear canal.

You are more likely to develop a blockage in the ear canal if you:

- Use cotton buds to clean your ear as this pushes the wax deeper into the canal. It may also cause an ear infection.
- Wear a hearing aid, earplugs or use in-ear speakers for i-pods etc, as these can all interfere with the natural process of ear cleaning.
- Have abnormally narrow ear canals.
- Have a particularly hairy ear canal.
- Are elderly- because the wax you produce is drier and harder.
- Have a dry skin problem e.g. eczema or psoriasis

Advice to help you manage and prevent ear wax blockage.

Earwax only needs to be removed if it causes dulled hearing, discomfort or if you need a hearing aid fitted or your doctor/nurse need to examine your eardrum.

If you experience any of the following seek advice from you GP or Practice Nurse at Woodlands Medical Centre:

- Pain
- Discharge or bleeding from the ear
- Sudden deafness or buzzing/'ringing' in the ear
- Foreign bodies in the ear
- Dizziness

If you are **not** experiencing any of the above, we recommend you manage the blockage as below:

Olive Oil Drops:

The following needs to be done 2-3 times daily for 14 days.

- Lie on your side with the affected ear uppermost
- Pull the outer ear gently backwards and upwards to straighten the ear canal
- Put 2-3 drops of olive oil into the affected ear(s) and gently massage just in front of the ear
- Stay lying on your side for **10mins** to allow the wax to soak in
- Afterwards, wipe away any excess oil but do not plug your ear with cotton wool as this will absorb the oil.

Your hearing may worsen after first starting to use olive oil drops, so we advise you concentrate on one ear at a time if both your ears are blocked with wax.

In most cases, after 14 days, the wax will have softened enough to encourage the wax to come out without further intervention.

Alternatively there are over the counter kits available from pharmacies. These contain a wax softener which you use for 3-4 days

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and a small bulb syringe to enable you to remove the wax from your ear canals yourself. Please consult your pharmacist first.

If you still feel your ears are blocked with wax, micro suction is available at various private clinics in Oxfordshire which you can find using the internet.

Ear Irrigation

This is only considered if the above recommendations have been unsuccessful, and if you have an appointment for a hearing aid test or at the request of your audiologist.

Although the risks are low, there is a small chance (thought to be 1 in 1000) of complications occurring e.g. a perforated eardrum, middle ear infection, external canal infection or causing ringing in the ears (tinnitus).

To help reduce this risk earwax needs to be softened with olive oil for **14 days**, as above, before attempting to irrigate the ear(s), in order for the wax to be soft enough to irrigate safely.

The GP can refer you to the ear syringing clinic at OUHT, or you can choose to use the below listed private ear care services.

Private Ear Care Services

Tara Tripp

01865 910202

enquiries@tripphearing.co.uk

James Hearing Group

0845 6801227

info@jameshearing.com

Oxford Hearing Centre

01865 861861

info@oxfordhearingcentre.co.uk