

## Ear Wax Treatment

Wax is an important and natural secretion found in the ear. It protects the ear against dust, dirt and bacteria, so it helps to prevent infection.

In fact for most, ear wax is a healthy positive thing to be and should only be removed in the following situations:

- It is affecting hearing (think impacted wax and features of conductive hearing loss).
- It is preventing visualisation of the ear drum which is necessary for diagnosis.
- Removal is necessary in order to make moulds for hearing aids.

If wax is not causing any problems, it is best left alone. The ear is self-cleaning and the wax should clear naturally, so it is unnecessary to try to remove the wax yourself. If wax is noticed on the outer ear, a wipe with a clean flannel may be all that is needed.

Ear Nose and throat specialists in the UK offer advice on treatment for problematic wax, and here at Wellington Medical Practice we are keen to follow these recommendations.

Syringing/irrigation is a hazardous method of wax removal, using softening drops is an effective and much safer way of removing excess wax.

Wax is a natural secretion and if it is not a problem it is best left alone.

Do not use cotton buds, hair grips, a pencil or other items to try to remove the wax

Consider ear wax softening drops of olive oil as the first option unless you are experiencing pain or discharge

You should put three or four drops of ordinary olive oil, two or three times a day for 8 weeks. Do not use cotton wool as it only soaks up the olive oil. This softens the wax so that it then runs out of its own accord. It does not harm the ear. You can continue for any length of time. Surprisingly, you will not necessarily see the wax come out. It often seems to come out unnoticed.

If you **know** you have a wax problem causing deafness and that your ear is healthy you can start the treatment for yourself. We recommend olive oil initially, if the wax is stubborn your health care professional may suggest alternative drops or the use of a bulb syringe, such as otex combi express system or portia bulb syringe, to help clear this.

If you are deaf and you **don't know** why, you should see a doctor or a nurse. If we find it is wax causing it, we will advise the olive oil treatment, or a suitable alternative.

If you have a build up of wax repeatedly, you can keep it free by putting olive oil down twice a week.

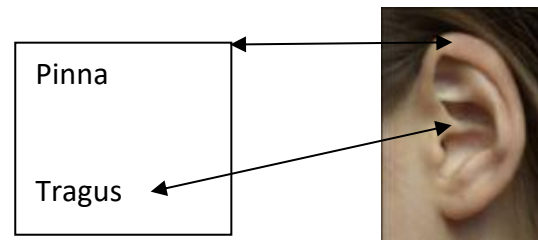
Wax normally comes out of the ear with the skin of the ear canal which grows from deep inside and moves to the outside over about 2 weeks.

**If you have, or suspect you have any kind of ear problem other than wax you should NOT put anything down the ear except after medical advice.**

**INSTALLATION OF EAR DROPS**

When using olive oil drops or alternatives as advised by your health care professional

- 1 Lie down on your side with the affected ear uppermost
- 2 Drop 3-4 drops of oil (at room temperature) into the ear canal and massage the tragus, just in front of the ear and pull the pinna backwards and upwards. This enables the oil to run down the ear canal.



- 3 Stay lying down for 5 minutes and then wipe away any excess oil.
- 4 Do not leave cotton wool at the entrance to the ear
- 5 Repeat the procedure with the opposite ear if necessary.

### *How to use a Bulb syringe*



Simply tilt head and squeeze up to 5 drops of olive oil or other advised ear drops into the ear, leave for a few minutes then wipe away any surplus with a tissue.

This procedure should be repeated twice daily while your symptoms clear.



Treatment usually takes 3-4 days



After using the ear drops for 3 to 4 days, **gently cleanse the ear with warm water** by rinsing with the **easy-to-use bulb syringe**.