

## Ear Wax

Advice from Judges Close Surgery on softening ear wax and preparing for ear syringing.

Ear wax is a natural product of the body and it is normal to have within the ear canal. Its function is to provide protection against infection. Ear syringing can lead to ear infections, perforated ear drum and tinnitus (persistent noise). We must provide **effective and safe** treatment, and we feel sure that you will agree. Therefore the following advice will help to reduce the amount of times syringing is required.

1. You need to put 2 drops of ordinary warm olive oil down the ear **twice a day** for **14 days**. We recommend olive oil only. We do **NOT** recommend specially formulated preparations that can be purchased which are not olive oil. This is because they can irritate healthy ears, thus producing more wax.
2. You can buy a pipette from your local chemist to help insert the olive oil in to the affected ear/s.
3. After inserting the oil drops into the ear, keep your head tilted for **ten minutes**, to allow absorption of oil in to the wax.
4. Place a small amount of cotton wool on the outside of your ear, with a little Vaseline applied to the cotton wool facing inside your ear, to stop the oil from running out.

Olive oil 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, but 14 days is usually enough. Surprisingly, you will not necessarily see wax come out. It often seems to come out unnoticed. If, after 14 days or more, you are still deaf from wax, you will need to make an appointment with a practice nurse to **decide** whether syringing is appropriate.

If you **know** you have a wax problem causing deafness and that your ear is healthy you can start the treatment for yourself.

If you have a build up of wax repeatedly, you can keep it free by putting olive oil down twice a week. You do not need regular ear syringing as this can stimulate the production of more wax.

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 for a minimum of 14 days. Ear wax does not cause pain, only decreased hearing. If you have pain persisting for more than 48hrs on regular painkillers, please see the Doctor or the Nurse.

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'.

**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.**