

When should I speak to my doctor?

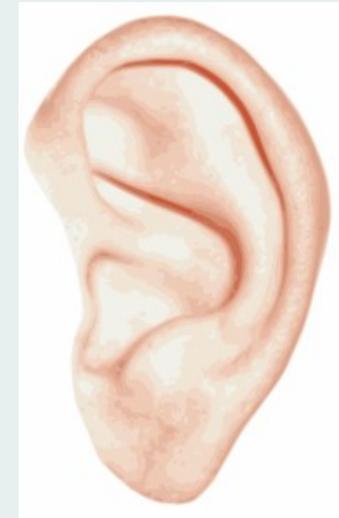
- Your hearing has not recovered as would be expected following ear drops.
- You get discharge from the ear or spreading redness around the ear hole.
- Your or your pharmacist think the ear drops would not be suitable.
- The ear you intend to treat is the only one you can normally hear with.

What about ear syringing?

Ear syringing is a very old treatment used to treat wax. It is only useful if the wax has not responded to treatment with ear drops. Hence we advise ear syringing should be reserved only for wax that is very hard to treat.

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How to treat ear wax





What is ear wax?

Ear wax is a naturally occurring substance produced in the outer third of your ear canal. It is part of your ear's normal, healthy, protection against ear infection.

It is designed to trap microbes and dust entering the ear canal that may cause infection or reduce your hearing.

When is ear wax a problem?

Ear wax can become problematic if it blocks the ear canal. If this occurs you may experience reduced hearing, pain and fullness.

Impacted ear wax is a term used to describe when wax completely blocks the ear canal.

How can I prevent ear wax blockage?

Ear wax naturally lines the surface of the ear canal, and any excess wax is normally removed by the hairs in your ear.

Ear wax build up generally occurs after the body's natural methods to remove the wax are disrupted. A common cause of this is when wax is pushed deeper into the ear canal, where the hairs needed to remove it are not present. The use of cotton buds, and inner ear headphones can cause this.

Generally we advise against using cotton buds to clear ear wax. In some cases they can encourage extra wax to be produced.

The use of olive oil ear drops can further help prevent the build up of excess wax. These drops can be purchased from your pharmacist. We suggest administering two to three drops once a week.

How to clear an ear wax blockage?

If you, or your doctor, thinks you have a blockage of ear wax there are many ear drops you can buy from your local pharmacy.

One of the most common treatments is sodium bicarbonate. These ear drops can be used four times a day for two weeks.

An alternative is olive oil ear drops.

Your local pharmacist will be able to assist if you are unsure which product to buy. Ear drops used to treat wax are generally safe to use in most people.

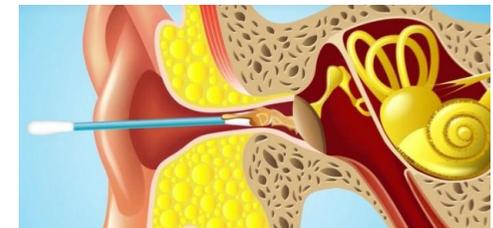
How to use ear drops

It is very important that ear drops are used correctly. It is often helpful to have someone else apply the drops to your ear canal.

- 1) Lie on your side with the affected ear pointing to the ceiling.
- 2) Insert 2-3 drops into the ear hole until the ear feels full.
- 3) Keep the ear pointing to the ceiling for a minimum of 5 to 10 minutes to allow the drops to be absorbed into the wax. Ensure when you stand up that the drops do not fall out of the ear.

Treatment should usually be for **two weeks**.

Generally we advise only treating one ear at a time, as following application your hearing may be reduced.



Cotton wool buds can push the ear wax deeper into the ear