

Treatment for wax in the ear

What should I do if I have wax in my ear?

Introduction

Wax production is a perfectly normal process and in most cases it doesn't cause any problems.

However, if the wax is blocking the ear canal or causing your hearing aid to whistle then we may require you to treat the wax or to have it removed professionally.

Under no circumstances should cotton buds be used to remove wax.

Treatment with olive oil will soften the wax and encourage it to move out of the ear naturally.

Please follow these instructions if we ask you to treat your wax with olive oil:

- You may wish to warm the olive oil very slightly by placing a small amount into a container and running the container under a warm tap or by immersing the container into a bowl of warm water
- A small dropper can be purchased from the chemist. Use the dropper to release a couple of drops onto the ear canal
- Briefly massage just above the ear lobe and lie still on your side for a few minutes

You may notice your hearing becomes temporarily worse after putting the oil in as the wax may swell as the oil soaks in. Therefore it is best to do this in the evening before you go to bed.

If we ask you to arrange an appointment for wax removal with your GP then they may request you treat your ears with olive oil in preparation for your appointment.

Alternatively, sodium bicarbonate drops can be purchased from the chemist and administered in accordance with the instructions on the bottle.

If you have a perforation or have been told not to use drops in your ears then please do not attempt to treat the wax yourself.

How to contact us

Audiology Department
Queen Elizabeth Hospital
Sheriff Hill
Gateshead
Tyne & Wear
NE9 6SX

Audiology Department
Bensham Hospital
Saltwell Road
Gateshead
Tyne & Wear
NE8 4YL

Audiology Department
Blaydon Primary Care Centre
Shibdon Road
Blaydon-on-Tyne
NE21 5NW

For all appointments and queries please telephone 0191 445 2530

Please note that all hearing aid appointments, including hearing aid repairs are made by calling the number provided.

Hearing aid batteries are available from Queen Elizabeth Hospital Gateshead's Audiology reception desk without an appointment. You will need to produce your battery card/record book when obtaining batteries. If you bring your used hearing aid batteries into the department we will recycle them for you.

Useful links:-

Action on Hearing Loss T: 0808 808 0123 Website: www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk

National Deaf Children's Society T: 0808 800 8880 Website: www.ndcs.org.uk

British Tinnitus Association T: 0800 018 0527 Website: www.tinnitus.org.uk

Data Protection

Any personal information is kept confidential. There may be occasions where your information needs to be shared with other care professionals to ensure you receive the best care possible.

In order to assist us to improve the services available, your information may be used for clinical audit, research, teaching and anonymised for National NHS Reviews. Further information is available in the leaflet Disclosure of Confidential Information IL137, via Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust website or the PALS Service.

This leaflet can be made available in other languages and formats upon request