

Ear Wax and Removal

Although the presence of ear wax in itself is normal and healthy, too much earwax can cause complications. Signs and symptoms of earwax blockage include:

- Plugged feeling in the ear
- Sounds in the ears (tinnitus)
- Earache
- Hearing loss

For effective removal it is often best to ensure the wax is soft. If the wax is not soft, your Audiologist may not be able to remove it. There are over-the-counter drops available at drug stores and professional clinics such as ours to assist with softening of wax. These wax softening agents designed specifically for earwax are most effective and give us the best chance of removing the wax in one appointment. Otherwise, you can use mineral oil, baby oil, or olive oil.

If you have a known perforation (hole) in one of your eardrums, or suspect you have one for any reason, please DO NOT put liquids including water in your ears and simply wait for your appointment.

- 1. Lie on your side with the affected ear towards the sky. If you are unable to lie on your side, then it is critical to have your head tilted as far as you can to maximize effectiveness.**
- 2. Put 5-10 drops of softening agent or oil into the affected ear.**
- 3. Cover the ear with a cotton ball to prevent leakage.**
- 4. Stay on your side or with your head tilted for at least 15 minutes. The ear canal is deep and this is to ensure we soften as much of the wax as possible. Repeat for the other ear.**

Repeat for your other ear if needed. Do the above on a daily basis 3-4 days before you see your Audiologist. You can expect one of the following wax-removal methods to be used at your appointment:

Irrigation - water is used to gently flush out the wax

Manual removal - wax is scooped out using a small spoon-like device called a curette

Microsuction - wax is removed with a thin vacuum tube

If any hearing concerns persist after wax removal is complete your Audiologist may recommend a hearing screening or assessment to help rule out any underlying conditions.