



South Wight
Medical Practice

CARING FOR YOUR EARS

Good hearing and healthy ears play an important part in your quality of life. If your ears are causing a problem, visit your doctor or nurse. They will be able to examine your ears and give you advice. If you have problems hearing, they can refer you for a hearing assessment.

If you are worried about hearing loss or tinnitus you can receive advice and information.

If your ears feel blocked, they will not always need to be washed out (Irrigation). You may need to be referred for Microsuction for removal of wax.

If you are concerned about your child's hearing you can discuss this with your doctor.

Do you:

- Have difficulty hearing the television and radio? Miss words in conversation?
- Work, or have worked, in a noisy place?

- visit noisy clubs and pubs?
- Listen to loud music with or without headphones?

- have difficulty hearing conversation if there is background noise?

- have a sensitivity to sudden/loud noises?
- have a problem hearing in only one ear?
- have itchy or runny ears?

Book an appointment with a practice nurse for an ear assessment and advice.

- Wax is normal - it provides protection for your ears.
- Your ears should be self-cleaning.
- Do not use COTTON BUDS to try and remove the wax, it will only be pushed further down the ear canal and block your ear.
- If you have repeated problems with wax blocking your ears, using olive oil drops regularly may prevent this.
- Your ears should only be cleaned by a practitioner trained in ear care, as they are able to see into your ear canals - you are unable to do this.
- If you have ear problems such as dry skin, eczema, dermatitis, 'runny ears', you will find that keeping your ears dry will improve the condition.
- The easiest way to keep your ears dry when bathing or showering is by using ear plugs or a piece of cotton wool smeared with Vaseline.
- It is advisable not to leave cotton wool in your ear unless advised to by your ear care practitioner.
- If you have problems with your ears, don't ignore them. Make an appointment to see your practice nurse. If you ignore the problem, it can make it more difficult to treat.

USING OLIVE OIL EAR DROPS

Olive oil encourages the natural movement of wax from the outer ear.

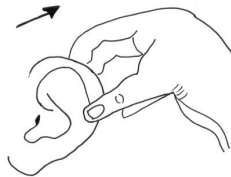
It is advisable to buy a bottle of olive oil and 'dropper' from your local pharmacist. Use olive oil drops as directed by the practice nurse.

Patients are requested to apply 1-2 drops into the affected ear/s, for 3 weeks prior to an irrigation appointment. This is helpful for wax removal, and it may be enough to alleviate the problem.

Sodium bicarbonate drops can be effective but may dry the lining of the ear canal.

Almond oil also effective – but should be avoided if you have a nut allergy.

1. Lie down on your side with the affected ear upwards.
2. Gently pull the outer ear backwards and upwards (see diagram below). Using room temperature olive oil and the dropper, drop 1-2 drops in the ear canal and gently massage the area in front of the ear.



3. Remain lying down for 10 minutes and then wipe away any excess oil. **DO NOT** put any cotton wool in your ear canal as this will absorb the oil like a wick.
4. Repeat the procedure with the opposite ear if necessary.

Some patients may perceive their tinnitus to be worse following irrigation. If you are concerned, please discuss this beforehand with your nurse or doctor.

Don't forget to tell the nurse if you have:

- had a perforation
- a history of mucoid discharge in the last year
- had a middle ear infection in the last 6 weeks
- had problems following irrigation previously
- had previous ear surgery
- pain/tenderness of the ear at the time of your appointment

FOLLOWING IRRIGATION

- Keep your ears dry for 48hrs, especially when bathing and swimming
- If your ear starts to discharge or becomes painful you should ring for an appointment with a nurse
- If you came because you are having difficulty hearing and it doesn't improve following wax removal you should seek further advice
- If a perforation of the eardrum is found following irrigation, you will be informed. The nurse will ensure that the water is thoroughly mopped from your canal and will advise you to keep your ears dry. Do not swim, bathe, or shower without swim plugs or cotton wool covered in Vaseline
- You may be given prophylactic systemic antibiotics. You will be advised to return for a review
- If you have continued problems with excessive wax, it may be beneficial to use 1-2 drops of olive oil each month. This will not prevent wax forming but will make removal easier.

Private Providers of Ear Wax Removal

Specsavers Hearing Centre (Microsuction)
107 High Street Newport
Telephone 821280
£35 per ear

Simply Ears (Irrigation/syringing)
Badgers Farm
Bathingbourne Lane
Nr Godshill
Tel 632015 or 07494798772
£45 one ear
£65 both ears
Home visit – extra £20

Gibbs and Gurnell (Microsuction)
34 Union Street
Ryde
Tel 562570
£48 one ear
£78 both ears
