

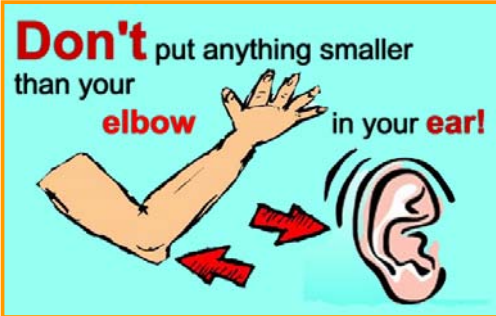
EAR CARE: DO'S AND DON'TS

DON'T

- The **BIG DO NOT!**



Don't put anything smaller than your **elbow** in your **ear!**



- Especially not cotton wool if you are trying to soften wax.
The wax needs to soak up the softener!

- Don't push anything into the ear such as cotton buds, hairgrips and matches. This can damage the delicate lining of the ear canal and may damage the ear drum. It also packs the wax down, making it more difficult to remove.

DO'S

- Use olive oil to soften the wax, if you don't have a hearing aid.
 - Instill it twice a day to soften the wax.
 - Lie down with the affected ear uppermost for 10-15mins after instilling the wax softener.
 - Inform your nurse if you have had a perforation of the eardrum, earache or discharge from the ear.

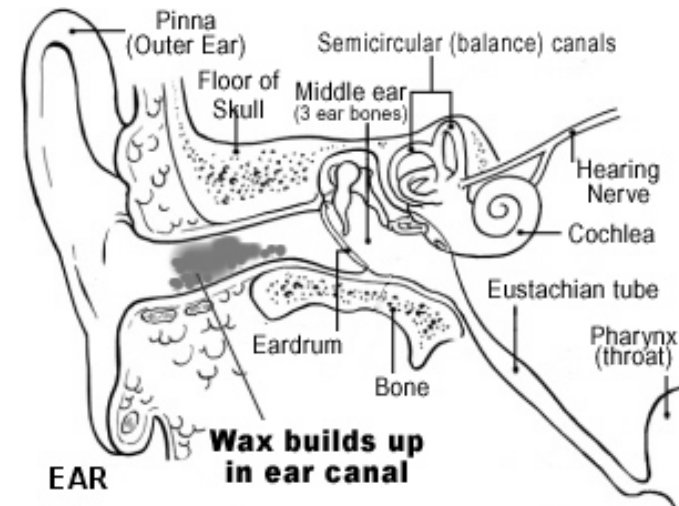
Regular use 1 drop of olive oil a week may help to prevent build-up of excessive wax in the ear if a hearing aid is not used (oil may cause the aid to malfunction).

Castlehead Medical Centre

Ear Wax

and

How You Can Deal with It



Your Appointment:.....

WHAT IS EAR WAX?

- Wax forms a protective coating of the skin in the ear canal.
- Ear wax is a natural body product which, when soft, will come out of its own accord
- The amount of wax made by the ears varies greatly from person to person
- People with narrow ear canals, the elderly and patients who use hearing aids are more likely to have a build-up of wax.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

- Your ear can feel full. • Your hearing may be reduced.

DIAGNOSIS

- A Doctor or Nurse can look inside your ear to confirm the presence of wax.

TREATMENTS

- **If you have a hearing aid** you should use **sodium bicarbonate drops** available to buy in the chemist or on prescription. Use at **night only**, when your **hearing aid is out**.
- If you **do not** use a **Hearing Aid**, **olive oil** is recommended to soften wax.
- If the problem continues, your doctor or nurse may recommend ear irrigation. This is a way of removing wax from the ear using a flow of water. As with any procedure, there are risks attached to ear irrigation and it can lead to an over production of ear wax.

Irrigation is only used when softening has been unsuccessful in removing ear wax.

Alternatively, you may be referred to the Hospital for wax removal by suction.

INSTILLATION OF EAR DROPS

- You could ask a friend or family member to help you with this procedure.
- Lie down with the affected ear uppermost.
- Pull the top of the ear backwards and upwards. Apply approximately 3 drops of wax softener into the ear. This should be at room temperature using a dropper (which can be purchased from a chemist). After using the drops, massage gently just in front of the ear.
- Remain in this position for 5-10 minutes allowing the drops to soak into the wax. (Do not plug the ear with cotton wool, as this will absorb the softener). Wipe away the excess softener if needed when you become upright again.
- Repeat this procedure for the other ear if necessary.
- The procedure should be repeated twice daily for up to 2 weeks.

IF YOU HAVE, OR SUSPECT YOU HAVE ANY KIND OF EAR PROBLEM OTHER THAN WAX, YOU SHOULD NOT PUT ANYTHING INTO YOUR EAR EXCEPT AFTER MEDICAL ADVICE.