



## Ear Wax Management: A Guide To Effective Oiling

The production of ear wax is a natural process and helps to keep your ears clean. For some people a build-up can occur over time that needs intervention to resolve.

In some circumstances we may be to syringe your ears to clear the build-up but this procedure is not suitable for all. Your co-operation is vital in preparing your earwax for syringing.

### Ear Syringing

If you choose to attend for syringing the nurse will assess your ear canals and make a decision about whether or not syringing is necessary and/or suitable for you. The nurse will discuss her decision with you. You may be asked to re-attend after further oiling at home, or you may be referred to your GP for further assessment.

If syringing is necessary the nurse will explain the procedure to you and make sure that you understand the risks involved. You must inform the nurse beforehand if you know of any reason why syringing should not take place.

### We will NOT syringe your ears if:

- \* **You have not oiled in the described way or oiling has been ineffective.**
- \* You have suffered complications during or after previous syringing
- \* You have had an ear infection in the last 6 weeks
- \* You have ever had ear surgery
- \* You have grommets or have had grommets removed in the last 18 months
- \* You have a perforation or your ear drum
- \* You have had any discharge from your ear in the last year
- \* You have a cleft palate (whether repaired or not)
- \* You have pain in your ear or are found to have inflamed ear canals
- \* **We do not consider it necessary, due to no wax or very little wax**

### We may not syringe your ears if:

- \* You have tinnitus
- \* You have a healed perforation of your ear drum.
- \* You are suffering from dizziness at the time of the appointment.

You will need to use **olive oil drops** to soften your earwax and sometimes effective oiling is the only intervention required. Olive oil can be purchased from most chemists, in a small bottle with a dropper or as a spray. You will need to use this **twice daily** for at least **7** days.

#### How to oil effectively:

- \* Lie down on your side with the affected ear upwards
- \* Insert a few drops of olive oil into your ear
- \* Gently pull your ear up and back, allowing the oil to move down to your ear drum.
- \* Stay in that position for 10 minutes
- \* Sit up and allow any excess oil to drain into a tissue
- \* Repeat this process for the other ear if necessary
- \* **NEVER** use cotton wool in your ears for any reason

If you notice an improvement to your hearing following oiling in this way, you may not need to have your ears syringed.

***Please note that regularly syringing ears,  
for example -every 6 months,  
is against medical advice and can be harmful.  
Ears should only be syringed if medically indicated.***

#### General Ear Health

- \* Try to keep your ears dry, as wet ears canals can encourage excessive production of earwax and/or infection.
- \* Do not use cotton buds (or any other implement) in your ears as this can impact present wax and encourage excessive production of wax.
- \* If you swim, consider using earplugs to keep your ear canals dry. An ear spray for swimmers is available from some chemists.

**If you have any questions about ear care  
or need further advice, please contact  
The Wellington Practice on 01252 335460**

This booklet was produced using guidance from  
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