

## What is Ear Irrigation (Syringing)?

This is a procedure where lukewarm water is squirted into the ear canal using special equipment. This aims to dislodge any plugs of wax in the ears.

Olive oil drops must be used twice daily for 14 days to make sure the wax is soft enough to remove. Sometimes the oil is enough to resolve the problem and an ear irrigation procedure is not needed.

You cannot have ear irrigation if you have an ear infection or perforated eardrum. Therefore we advise patients to have an ear 'check' appointment with the Nurse prior to an ear syringe appointment being booked.

The ear irrigation procedure does carry risks of damaging the ear canal, perforation of the eardrum and ear infections and should only be performed if symptoms are present and is absolutely necessary.

The nurses at the surgery who carry out this procedure have been fully trained and specialist equipment is used.

## What can I do to prevent earwax build up ?

If you are prone to lots of earwax it can help to regularly use ear drops to prevent build up. There are various options including olive oil, almond oil and sodium bicarbonate drops. These are all found in your local chemist. Evidence shows that all these options are equally effective so it's important to find what works for you.

Everyone's ears are different and will need a different frequency but in general drops should be applied between once every 2 weeks and twice a week as required.



### For more information please contact:

- Appointments line at The Health Centre, Bradford on Avon, 01225 866611
- Receptionist at Winsley Health Centre, 01225 860003
- Receptionist at St Damian's Surgery, Melksham, 01225 898490



**BRADFORD ON AVON &  
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# Ear Wax

## Prevention & Treatment



[www.boamhp.co.uk](http://www.boamhp.co.uk)

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## What is earwax?

Cerumen is the waxy substance produced by glands in the ear. It is there to protect the ear canal lining and keep it clean.

Everyone has different amounts of earwax, some people find they have a lot and this can create a plug in the ear.

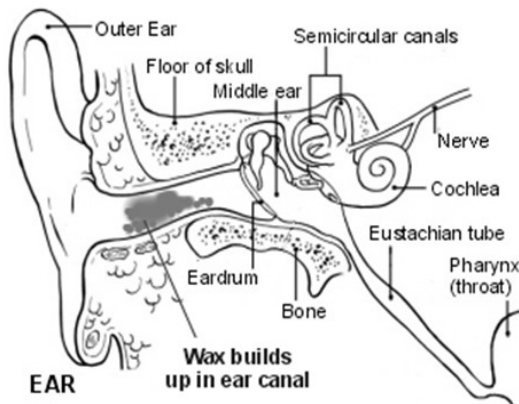
Earwax is not dirty or harmful and does not need to be removed unless causing symptoms.

Possible symptoms include a feeling of fullness, ear pain or reduced hearing. Hard wax can occasionally cause ringing in the ears or dizziness.

## What if my earwax is causing symptoms?

If you find your earwax has built up and is causing symptoms the first treatment you can try using is ear drops.

The best ear drops for this purpose are drops which will break down and soften the wax e.g. sodium bicarbonate drops (found in your local Pharmacy).



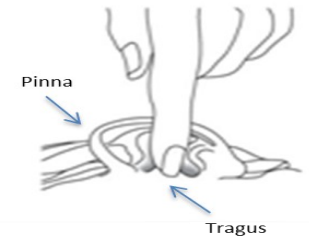
## Instillation of ear drops

Preparation for wax removal or to encourage normal expulsion of wax from the outer ear.

### When using olive oil drops

Applying drops 1-2 times daily for 14 days for wax removal as follows:

- ◆ Lie down on your side with the affected ear uppermost.
- ◆ Pull the pinna (outer ear) backwards and upwards, Drop 2 or 3 drops of oil, at room temperature, into the ear canal and massage the tragus just in front of the ear.
- ◆ Remain lying down for 5 minutes and then wipe away any excess oil. DO NOT leave cotton wool at the entrance to the ear.
- ◆ Repeat the procedure with the opposite ear if necessary.



Sometimes the drops produce a fizzing sensation in the ear which is normal.

### If the symptoms continue

If after the two weeks symptoms have continued, the next step is to make an appointment to have your ears checked by a Practice Nurse (or Emergency Nurse if more urgent) to ensure there are no signs of infection.

If during the appointment with the Nurse, it is confirmed that you have a build up of wax (and no infection) they may suggest you need to have your ears irrigated (syringed) - if this is the case it may mean booking a further appointment to have this done (as not all nurses have been trained to carry out the actual procedure).

**PLEASE NOTE: Do not try to clean the ears with any small objects such as cotton buds. This causes irritation to the canal producing more wax. It also risks perforating the eardrum and causing infections.**