

## Ear Syringing

This service is no longer offered at the surgery. You may wish to have this treatment privately.

Complications of ear syringing include infection, trauma and perforation. Therefore this is only considered if the above recommendations have proved to be unsuccessful. Ear wax needs to be softened as above for **at least** 2-3 weeks before attempting to syringe.

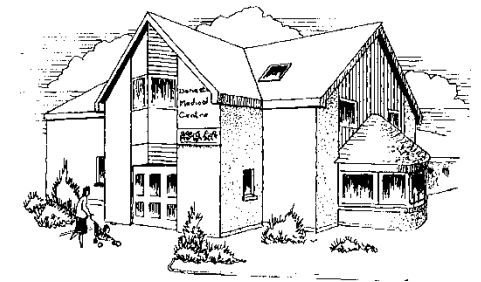
## Ongoing self-care

If your ears are regularly becoming blocked with wax, after clearing the blockage, it is suggested that you use olive oil drops as above around once a week to keep the wax soft and encourage the natural process of wax expulsion.



Fairview Street, Danestone, Aberdeen AB22 8ZP  
Telephone: (01224) 822866

# Danestone Medical Practice



## Information about Ear Wax

## Ear wax is normal

- ◆ It provides protection for your ears
- ◆ Your ears are self-cleaning
- ◆ The movement of your jaw while eating and talking moves the wax along the canal
- ◆ Ear wax is only a problem if it causes deafness, pain or if a health professional needs a clear view of the ear drum

## What makes ear wax worse?

- ◆ The amount of wax produced varies from person to person
- ◆ Some people produce excessive amounts of wax and this can block the ear canal
- ◆ Wearing a hearing aid, ear plugs and/or headphones can hinder wax expulsion
- ◆ Narrow and/or hairy ear canals
- ◆ If you are elderly – the wax produced may be harder and drier
- ◆ Dry skin in people who suffer with eczema or psoriasis

## What NOT to do - some suggestions

- ◆ Don't use cotton buds in your ear. This forces the wax deeper into the canal and can cause damage, or possible infection.
- ◆ Don't use objects such as matches, hair grips, crochet hooks, knitting needles, keys etc. this can also cause damage and possible infection.
- ◆ If your ears are itchy do not scratch or rub them with your finger nails or any other objects.
- ◆ Do not use anything smaller than your elbow in your ear!!

## What helps?

- ◆ Try and keep your ears dry. When washing your hair, showering or swimming putting some Vaseline around the inner part of your ear can help.
- ◆ Don't put your head under the water when bathing.
- ◆ There are several different types of eardrops you can use, including drops containing sodium bicarbonate, olive oil or almond oil. Speak to your pharmacist about the most suitable product for you and make sure you read the leaflet that comes with it.

## When to contact your GP

If you are experiencing the following:

- ◆ Pain
- ◆ Discharge or bleeding from the ear
- ◆ Sudden deafness
- ◆ Dizziness
- ◆ Foreign bodies (you may be advised to attend A&E)

## What you can do to manage the problem?

If you are not experiencing any of the symptoms above, the following is recommended:

1. Olive Oil Drops/Spray – It is recommended that this is done 2-3 times daily for at least 2-3 weeks. Lie on your side with the affected ear uppermost.
2. Pull the outer ear gently backwards and upwards to straighten the ear canal.
3. Put 2-3 drops of olive oil into the affected ear(s). Gently massage just in front of the ear.

4. Stay lying on your side for 10 minutes to allow the wax to soak up the oil.
5. Afterwards, wipe away any excess oil but do not plug your ear with cotton wool as this simply absorbs the oil.
6. Your hearing problem may initially worsen after first starting to use the olive oil drops; this is why you are advised to concentrate on treating one ear at a time if both ears are blocked with wax.
7. In most cases, the wax will have softened sufficiently to encourage the wax to come out without further intervention.
8. However, if you feel your hearing is still impaired after following this advice for at least 2 weeks, please make an appointment with the practice nurse for further advice and management.

## Self-irrigation

- ◆ There are a number of over-the-counter kits available from pharmacies. These contain a wax softener as drops which you use for 3-4 days and a small bulb syringe to enable you to remove the wax from your ear canals yourself.
- ◆ Patients are advised that there is very little clinical based research available on self-irrigation. Care needs to be taken to ensure there is no trauma and or infection as result of self-irrigation.
- ◆ For further advice please speak to your pharmacist