

Having your ears syringed (irrigated)



Ear irrigation is a treatment to remove ear wax which is blocking the ears.

This is also called having your ears syringed.



Everyone has ear wax.

Ear wax covers the skin inside the ears.

Ear wax keeps the ears healthy to protect them from dirt, water and germs.



Sometimes too much ear wax builds up and blocks the ears.

This can be painful and can make it hard to hear.



Wax blocking the ears needs to be removed if:

- you need a hearing test
- you need a mould to be made for a hearing aid
- you have a hearing aid and the ear wax is making it whistle.

Ear syringing is not ok for everyone.

It should not be used if you have had:

- problems with syringing before
- damage to the eardrum
- runny liquid (discharge) coming from your ear





It should not be used if you have had:

- a grommet (an operation where a little tube was put in your eardrum)
- ear surgery in the last 18 months
- a cleft palate (treated or not)
- an ear infection now.



If you have any of these, you must not have your ears syringed.

You will need to have ear wax removed at the hospital.



Before having your ears syringed, the wax needs to be made soft.

Use olive oil ear drops to soften the wax.



You can get these from your doctor or chemist.



Put 2 or 3 drops in each ear, twice a day for one week.



Do not put cotton wool, cotton buds or any other object in your ears.

It will make the wax worse and may damage your ear.



Syringing is when the ear wax is washed out with water.

A special machine is used, called an irrigator. This removes the wax that is blocking the ear.



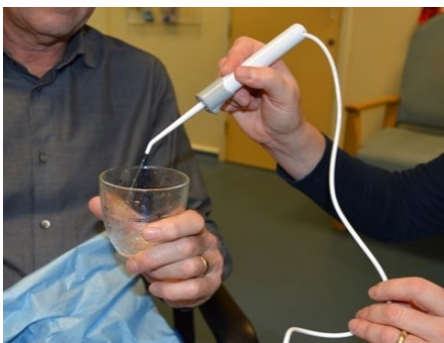
The health worker will look inside your ears first to check the ear wax.



They will use a special light called an otoscope.



The irrigator tank is filled with warm water.



The health worker can show you how the water comes out of the irrigator.



You will be given a cape or towel to wear to keep your clothes dry.



You or your carer will be asked to hold a pot under your ear to collect the water.



The tube will be put just inside your ear.
Warm water will run in your ear.
This might be noisy and feel strange.



The water should not hurt.
If it hurts, tell the health worker so they can help you.



The health worker will stop and look in your ears a few times to check how the wax is coming out.



When the irrigation is finished you will be asked to dry your ear.

Hold a tissue to your ear and lean your head to the side.



The health worker will tell you if you need your other ear syringed.

Sometimes not all the wax comes out the first time.

The health worker will tell you if you need to come back another day.



Ear syringing is usually safe.

But a very few people can have problems.



Problems might be:

- swelling or pain inside the ear
- Tinnitus (noises in your ear)
- perforation (hole in the eardrum)
- ear infection
- vertigo (feeling dizzy).



The health worker will talk to you about this.

If you are worried that any of these things have happened, see your GP.

Need help?



Our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) can help you.

You can ask a question or tell them if you are unhappy about something.



Phone: 0800 030 4550

The team can phone you back.

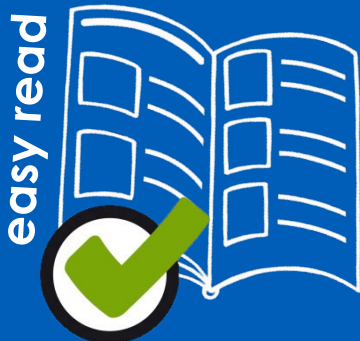


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(we care)

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