

# Clinical protocols

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### B. Document Details

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## Blocked Ears Factsheet

### **EAR SYRINGING IS NOT WITHOUT RISK AND IS OFTEN UNECESSARY SO PLEASE READ THIS FACT SHEET BEFORE CONTACTING THE SURGERY IF YOU HAVE BLOCKED EARS**

#### Ear wax:

- Ear wax is a natural substance produced within the ear canal to help protect the ear from infection.
- Ears are designed to be self-cleaning but occasionally the ear canal can become blocked with wax causing reduced hearing, tinnitus and earache.
- A build-up of wax causing blocked ears is a common cause of hearing loss is.

#### Treatment:

- There are several safe and effective ways to remove wax at home to reduce the need for ear syringing.
- Syringing can very occasionally cause infection or damage the ear drum so alternative options should be carried out before booking in to undergo ear syringing.
- Olive oil and other ear drops available from the pharmacy soften the wax so that it will come out of the ear on its own; this often happens without you noticing when it comes out.
- If you know that you have a wax problem causing deafness and that your ear is healthy you should put **2 drops of olive oil** into your ear **twice a day for 14 days**. You can use a pipette from the chemist to help application of the drops.
  1. Lie on your side with the ear being treated facing upwards
  2. Gently pull the pinna (outer ear) upwards and backwards
  3. Put two drops of olive oil at room temperature into the ear canal
  4. Gently massage the area in front of the ear
  5. Stay lying with the ear upwards for 10 minutes to allow absorption into the wax
  6. Repeat for the other ear if required
- If your hearing is still reduced after 14 days you will need to make an appointment with the practice nurse to decide whether syringing is appropriate.

#### How to avoid repeated build up:

- Do not use cotton buds as these can push the wax deeper into your ear.
- Putting two drops of olive oil into your ears twice a week can prevent build up.
- Chislehurst Medical Practice does not do routine ear syringing for recurrent build up

#### Warning:

- If you have **persistent pain** for more than 48hrs please see your doctor or nurse.
- If you have ever had **ear surgery** or **ear drum perforation** please discuss with the nurse before starting the treatments described above.
- If you suspect you have any kind of ear problem other than ear wax build up you should not put anything into the ear but make an appointment for assessment.