Ampleforth & Hovingham Surgeries – Patient Information

Ear Syringing – Service Withdrawn

Patients are advised that we are no longer providing Ear Syringing as an elective service when requested by a patient.

Below is some further advice and information that may assist you should you have a build-up of ear wax.

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**What is ear wax?**

Ear wax is a natural bodily secretion which is protective for your ears. In most cases it removes itself during sleep and when moving your jaw such as when eating and talking.

**What are the symptoms of ear wax build-up?**

Some people produce more ear wax than others. The most common symptoms are hearing loss and earache. In some cases it can also present with tinnitus and itchiness.

**What can I do to remove ear wax?**

A simple and easy way to remove ear wax is with Medical Grade **Olive Oil Drops/ Sodium Bicarb Spray** (can be purchased from a pharmacy) – It is recommended that this is done 3-4 times daily for 3-5 days.

1. 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 3-4 drops of olive oil into the affected ear(s) and 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. In most cases, the wax will have softened sufficiently to encourage the wax to come out without further intervention. Lumps of earwax should fall out of your ear, especially at night when you are lying down.
7. However, if you feel your hearing is still impaired, please make an appointment with the practice nurse or healthcare assistant for further advice and management.

**What about ear syringing?**

Ear syringing has been discredited as a method of removing ear wax. The National Institute of Clinical Excellence (NICE) has produced guidance which states that ear syringing can cause more harm than good. It is associated with increased –

* Ear infections
* Ear drum perforations
* And trauma to the ear canal

There is also a reported 29% failure rate in the removal of earwax.

You may also wish to self-refer for private micro-suction. There are number of clinics locally that offer this but do remember that most cases of ear wax do improve with topical drops / spray.

**When should I see a clinician?**

You should see a clinician if you develop fever, severe pain, discharge, bleeding or sudden onset deafness.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/earwax-build-up/>