



EAR WAX (CERUMEN) REMOVAL

Ear wax, or cerumen, is made by glands in the skin of the ear canal. If it is made in excess or is very dry, a blockage or impaction may occur. Q-tips are not recommended for ear cleaning because they risk injury to the ear drum and ear bones within the middle ear; in addition, Q-tips tend to push wax further inside the ear canal.

We recommend the following for ear wax impaction: while lying down, turn your head to one side, and instill 3 drops of mineral oil or baby oil into the ear canal facing the ceiling using an eye-dropper; allow the oil to soak into the wax for 1-2 minutes, and then turn over and repeat these steps in the opposite ear. This should be done 3 times per day for several days to soften the wax. For the next several days, instill the ear canals with 3% hydrogen peroxide in the same manner that you instilled the oil; hydrogen peroxide is available at pharmacies and most grocery stores, and it will usually bubble out the wax once it has become soft. If you have a ventilating tube (a.k.a. PE tube) or hole in your ear drum, do not use hydrogen peroxide or mineral oil drops in your ear.

For stubborn ear wax impactions, it may be necessary to continue the oil and hydrogen peroxide for several weeks or to have it removed by your doctor. People who are frequently troubled by ear wax impactions can use oil and hydrogen peroxide on a weekly basis.