

## Ear Wax

Ear wax, or cerumen, is made by the glands in the skin of the ear canal. If it is made in excess or is very dry, a blockage or impaction may result. Cotton swabs, or Q-Tips, are usually not advised for ear cleaning. Instead, try the following to clear your ears or prevent over-accumulation of wax.

**If your ears are plugged and your eardrums are intact:** Turn your head to one side and gently fill the ear canal with baby oil or mineral oil, using an eye dropper. Allow the oil to soak in for 5 minutes before turning over and placing the oil in the opposite ear. Do this twice a day for three or four days. This will allow the wax to soften. For the next three or four days, gently fill the ear canals with 3% hydrogen peroxide in the same manner that you instilled the oil. Peroxide is available at your pharmacy or market and will usually bubble out the ear wax once it has become soft.

Alternatively, you may mix a few ounces of distilled white vinegar with an equal volume of warm tap water such that the mixture is body temperature. Use a rubber bulb syringe to gently irrigate the ear canal over a sink.

**If your ears are clean and your eardrums are intact:** Once or twice a week, prior to bedtime, instill two drops of mineral oil to each ear. Rub the ear canal cartilage gently to ensure that the oil has been spread over the entire surface of the canal. The next morning, gently wash the bowl of the external ear with a warm washcloth.

Discontinue these treatments if you have any discomfort, dizziness, or drainage. Do not repeat this more than monthly unless directed by your doctor. More stubborn ear impactions may need to be removed by your doctor. If you have any further questions, do not hesitate to ask us.