



Ear wax

A quick guide for understanding ear wax related problems.

First, let us try to understand what earwax is. Ear wax is a substance that is produced in your ear canal by ceruminous glands in the external ear canal. It helps prevent some dust and small particles from entering the ear and damaging or disrupting the eardrum. Everyone produces ear wax, although some produce more than others, and it is determined genetically.

Important note: Ear wax dries up and its self-cleaning, secondary to the vibration of the ear canal due to the movement of the jaw joint that's in front of the ear. But for some people, they experience an earwax buildup of earwax impaction.

Your ENT doctor can see if you have an earwax blockage by looking in your ear. Your doctor uses an endoscope that lights up and magnifies your ear to examine it well.

Symptoms of earwax build-up:

Here are a few symptoms of earwax build-up:

- You may experience hearing loss
- Ear pain or blocked feeling in the ears.
- Buzzing or ringing in your ears (tinnitus)
- Vertigo - feeling dizzy and unable to balance

Ways to treat earwax build-up at home and keep your ears squeaky clean:

Avoid using your fingers or any objects like cotton buds, keys, or safety pins to remove earwax. This will push it deeper and make it worse.

There are certain drops that you can buy over the counter that can help soften the ear.

Apply 2 to 3 drops of medical grade olive or almond oil in your ear 3 to 4 times a day. You can try this for 3 to 5 days.

Note: Do not use drops if you have a hole in your eardrum or a perforated eardrum. Remember, there is no evidence that ear candles get rid of earwax.



When should I see my ENT doctor, and what are the red flags?

If, for whatever reason, you feel that the home remedies have failed, you can visit your ENT doctor. Your doctor will be able to recommend medicines to dissolve the earwax.

Also, you may need to visit your health care provider once or twice a year for regular cleaning.

Visit your ENT doctor when conditions such as discomfort in your ears or issues with your hearing persist for a long time, ear pain, a blocked feeling in your ear, ringing or buzzing in your ears, or when you experience vertigo related problems - spinning sensations, loss of balance, an inability to walk, persistent vomiting, or a high fever.

Treatment for ear wax impaction::

Treatment of an earwax impaction depends on the severity of your earwax problem; quality and consistency of the earwax that is built up.

If your ear wax looks hard or dried up, your ENT doctor may use a small drop of an oil solution inside your ear canal. This will help to soften the earwax before they try to remove it.

Your ENT doctor can remove excess wax by using a small, curved tool called a curet or by using suction techniques under endoscopic vision.

Medicated ear drops may also be recommended to help soften the wax, such as carbamide peroxide. Since these drops can irritate the delicate skin of the eardrum and ear canal, use them only as directed by your ENT doctor.

- Dr. Prashanth R Reddy

“E.N.T health - ENTry for better senses”.

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