**EAR SYRINGING CHANGES**

In General practice we have been forced to look at the services we provide and prioritise them in order of clinical necessity. This means changes for people requesting ear irrigation (ear syringing).

As widely reported in the media, General Practice is currently working in times of unprecedented pressure.  We have limited resources and facilities, and we must make the best use of the clinical staff and organise services effectively to ensure the best use of time and resources.

We do understand that any change to services provided will be difficult for the patients affected, but organising our ear irrigation service this way, will preserve this service for the foreseeable future. Demand for ear irrigation has grown considerably and is not funded as part of our NHS contract.

In order to use our resources in the most cost effective way the treatment room will be providing ear irrigation at specific “ear irrigation clinics” There will be two clinics per month. Should demand outstrip capacity, there will be a waiting list .If patients feel they are unable to wait for a clinic slot, they may wish to self- treat or access an alternative private service.

**Private Suppliers**

* The Medical at Aztec West and other Bristol locations- 01173763732

Private ear syringing costs £55 for one ear and £70 for two ears

[**https://www.themedical.co.uk/gp/ear-syringing**](https://www.themedical.co.uk/gp/ear-syringing01173763732)

* Clifton Audiology at Greenway Community Practice - 0117 959 8939.

Costs are 1 ear £40 or 2 ears £60

<http://www.greenwaycommunitypractice.nhs.uk/index.php/ear-microsuction/>

* Westbury-on-Trym, Primary Care Centre, Private Ear Microsuction

0117 962 3406

* Spire Hospital Bristol Private Ear Microsuction

0117-321-1713

**SELF - TREATMENT OF EAR WAX**

**What is ear wax ?**

Ear wax is normal and is produced to form a protective coating over the skin in the ear. Ears are normally self clearing and wax only becomes a problem if it causes deafness or discomfort.

**Can I remove ear wax myself?**

Yes by generously instilling olive oil drops **2-3 times per day for 14days**. into the affected ear whilst lying on side for 15 minutes. This will soften the wax and in most cases encourage it to come out without further intervention.

Alternatively if olive oil on its own is unsuccessful at removing wax, then you could try a bulb syringe, instructions below.

**Is it safe?**

Yes, as far as we know. In the USA and in Europe ear-wax is commonly self-treated with a bulb syringe and 2 recent research studies have concluded that self-treatment is both safe and effective.

**Does it work?**

Yes, in about half the people who use it. Although syringing by a nurse is slightly more effective, this treatment may be more convenient for you and it might be worth trying first.

**Is it expensive?**

The syringe, shown below, costs from £3.50 and is sold in pharmacies. Some pharmacies sell the bulb and drops together for around £9

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**Who should NOT use this method?**

People who have a hole in their ear drum (perforation) should not use this method. If your ears are painful or have fluid coming out of them you should see a doctor and don’t use this method.

**When should I seek advice from a GP or Practice Nurse?**

If you:

* have pain
* discharge or bleeding from ear
* sudden deafness or buzzing
* foreign bodies in ear
* dizziness