**Close Farm Surgery Ear Syringing Advice Sheet**

Ear wax is a natural product of the body and it is normal to have within the ear canal. Its function is to provide protection against infection. Ear syringing can lead to infections, perforated ear drum and tinnitus (persistent noises). We must provide effective and safe treatment and we feel sure you will agree. Therefore the following advice will help to reduce the amount of times syringing is required.

* You will need to put 2 drops of ordinary warm olive oil (available from supermarkets) down the ear twice a minimum of 7 days. We recommend olive oil only. We do not recommend specifically formulated preparations that can be purchased which are not olive oil. This is because they can irritate healthy ears, thus producing more wax
* You can buy a pipette from your local chemist to help insert the olive oil into the affected ear/s
* After inserting the oil drops into the ear, keep your head tilted for ten minutes to allow absorption of oil into the wax
* Place a small amount of cotton wool on the outside of your ear with a little Vaseline applied to the cotton wool facing inside your ear to stop the wax running out

Olive oil softens the wax so that it then runs out of its own accord. It does not harm the ear. You can continue for any length of time, but 7 days is usually enough. Surprisingly you will not necessarily see wax come out. It often seems to come out unnoticed. If, after 7 days or more you are still deaf from wax you will need to make an appointment with a practice nurse to decide whether syringing is appropriate.

If you know you have a wax problem causing deafness and that your ear is healthy you can start the treatment for yourself. If you have a build-up of wax repeatedly, you can keep it free by putting olive oil down twice a week. You do not need regular ear syringing as this can stimulate the production of more wax.

If you are deaf and you do not know why you should see a doctor. If we find wax is causing it we will advise the olive oil treatment for a minimum of 7 days. Ear wax does not cause pain, only decreased hearing. If you have pain persisting for more than 48 hours on regular painkillers, please see the doctor.

Do not try to clean the ear canal with cotton wool buds etc. This can make things worse as you will push the wax deeper inside. It may also cause an ear infection. Let the ear ‘clean itself’. If you have, or suspect you have any kind of ear problem other than wax you should not put anything down the ear except after medical advice.