

EAR IRRIGATION ADVICE SHEET

BEFORE IRRIGATION

- In order to soften ear wax prior to removal it is often helpful to apply 1-2 drops of room-temperature olive oil twice a day prior to an appointment. It is easier if you use a dropper or an olive oil ear spray.
- Do not use cotton wool following insertion of the oil as it will soak it up. Only use the wool to wipe away any excess from around the outer ear.

Sodium bicarbonate drops can be effective but may dry the lining of the ear canal.
Almond oil also effective – but should be avoided if you have a nut allergy.

DON'T FORGET TO TELL THE NURSE IF YOU HAVE:

- had a perforation
- a history of mucoidal discharge in the last year
- had a middle ear infection in the last 6 weeks
- had problems following irrigation previously
- had previous ear surgery
- pain/tenderness of the ear at the time of your appointment

FOLLOWING IRRIGATION

- Keep your ears dry for a few days, especially when bathing and swimming, this will minimise any potential risk of infection developing.
- If you should experience any pain, tinnitus (ringing in the ears) or discharge from your ears please contact our service to arrange a review.
- If you came because you are having difficulty hearing and it doesn't improve following wax removal you should seek further advice.

CARING FOR YOUR EARS

- Wax is normal - it provides protection for your ears.
- Your ears should be self-cleaning. If you use COTTON BUDS to try and remove the wax, it will only be pushed further down the ear canal and block your ear.
- If you have repeated problems with wax blocking your ears, using olive oil drops just once or twice a month may help to keep your ears in good condition and help them to self-clean the way they are designed to.
- Your ears should only be cleaned by a professional trained in ear care as they are able to see into your ear canals - you are unable to do this.
- If you have ear problems such as dry skin, eczema, dermatitis, 'runny ears', you will find that keeping your ears dry will improve the condition.
- The easiest way to keep your ears dry when bathing or showering is by using ear plugs or a piece of cotton wool smeared with Vaseline.
- It is advisable not to leave cotton wool in your ear unless advised to by your ear care nurse.
- Hearing can be damaged by exposure to loud noises wear ear defenders when possible.
- If you have problems with your ears, don't ignore them. Make an appointment to see your nurse or doctor. If you ignore the problem it can make it more difficult to treat.