**PATIENT INFORMATION FOR EAR WAX**

Wax forms naturally in the ear canal, its purpose it to protect the ear by trapping dust and other particles from entering the ear. The wax usually makes its own way to the ear opening where it is washed away. Some people produce more wax than others. As we get older the wax becomes less moist and does not come out of the canal easily. If you have continuing problems with ear wax it may help to put one or two drops of warm olive oil in your ear once or twice a week.

**Cotton wool buds should never be used as they push wax further into the ear canal.**

In the past manual ear syringing has been offered at this Practice as a way of removing any wax, however, GPs are not contracted to provide this as an NHS service. In addition to this recent research has shown the risks of this procedure outweigh the benefits.

**Risks are associated with ear syringing include:-**

* Injury to the ear canal
* Post-procedure infection
* Tinnitus (noises in the ear). This can be caused or made worse by syringing
* Perforation of the ear drum
* Deafness

As a result of this, for safety reasons ear syringing is no longer available at this practice.

Most wax will disappear on its own after 2-3 weeks of warm olive oil treatment.

* **Warm olive oil drops should be put in the ear at least twice a day**

**To put in drops:**

* Lie on your side (or tilt your head to the side). Pull the ear upwards and backwards and put in 2 or 3 drops of warm olive oil into the ear canal using a dropper.
* Massage just in front of the ear gently
* Stay on your side or with your head tilted for 5 to 10 minutes
* Wipe away any excess oil
* **Do not put cotton wool in the ear as this will draw out the oil.**

Olive oil is better than commercial drops as it does not irritate or alter the natural acidity of the ear canal which is required to prevent infection.

If the ear still feels blocked after persistent treatment with oil then a safer option for ear wax removal is **MICROSUCTION**. This is a private service offered by various providers such as the following:

Specsavers – [https://www.**specsavers**.co.uk/ear-health/earwax-removal](https://www.bing.com/aclk?ld=e8lwVlDsNde4g8Sq5iFJ8L9zVUCUyZaPNKsIBRJHx3mS1_vlMMittOVG0YY_gctoGoZLeqSqBkawMW9rgP0nL1kjskV6P5CGEeBjWJqLYmgFM7ZjG3dR0Bi-crua51Hdv5DZOvaptDFcf1FPldTpdd_tivmJ-ioNp4ulbGQxnVkpiBY5-e&u=&rlid=6ab3870f04001df5c5c7d9f8840fa57d)

Specsavers Bexleyheath – 116a Broadway Bexleyheath Kent DA6 7DQ - 020 8298 9920

Bexley Complementary Health Clinic – 41A Bourne Road Bexley Kent DA5 1LW - 01322 686028

For those patients who have been asked to have their ears syringed prior to an audiology appointment at the hospital appointment, we can offer an ear examination to check for wax but not ear syringing.