



From 1st September 2017 Ear irrigation (Ear syringing) will no longer be available at Linden Medical Group

Linden Medical Group is committed to providing best practice and high quality medical care to their registered patients. Ear syringing is no longer considered to be the first line treatment for the clearing of ear wax and it is not a funded service within the NHS for General Practice. Current guidelines are that ear drops should be used to soften the wax which will then enable the natural movement of the wax from the ear. In line with current best practice, the Linden Medical Group has made the decision to withdraw the ear syringing service with immediate effect.

Blocked ears (wax) self-care guidelines for patients

Earwax:

Earwax is a normal build-up of dead cells, hair, and foreign material such as dust, and natural wax which forms a protective coating on the skin in the ear canal. The quantity of earwax produced varies greatly from person to person.

A plug of earwax is not a serious problem. You only need to remove earwax if it is causing symptoms such as dulled hearing or when fitting a hearing aid.

Note: If you think you have ear wax, do not try to clean the ear canal with cotton wool buds. This can make things worse, as you will push some earwax deeper inside. It may also cause an ear infection.

Ear drops:

Ear drops alone will clear a plug of earwax in most cases. Put 2 or 3 drops of ordinary olive oil down the ear using a 'dropper' 2 or 3 times a day for 2-3 weeks. This softens the wax so that it then runs out of its own accord without harming the ear. You can continue for any length of time, but 3 weeks is usually enough. Surprisingly, you will not necessarily see wax come out. It often seems to come out unnoticed. If olive oil does not work you can buy sodium bicarbonate drops from pharmacies.

Don't use any ears drops if you have a hole in your eardrum (called a perforated eardrum).

How to use ear drops:

1. Warm the drops to room temperature before using them
2. Pour a few drops into the affected ear
3. Lie with the affected ear uppermost when putting in drops
4. Stay like this for 10 minutes to allow the drops to soak into the earwax



Preventing earwax build-up

You can't prevent earwax. It's there to protect your ears from dirt and germs.

However, you can keep using ear drops to soften the wax. This will help it fall out on its own and should prevent blocked ears. If you are prone to repeated wax built up you can continue to use olive oil drops twice a week to prevent recurrence.

Ear irrigation (ear syringing):

Ear irrigation is no longer recommended as first line treatment for blocked ears. Ear syringing can lead to ear infections, perforated ear drum and tinnitus (persistent noise). It is no longer a requirement to provide this service in General Practice.

Your pharmacist can help with earwax build-up. They can give advice and suggest the treatment.

If you have ear symptoms that concern you, please book an appointment to see the Nurse or GP at the Practice.