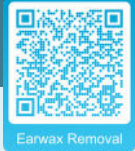


EAR WAX REMOVAL



Earwax (also known as cerumen) has protective properties against infection in our outer ear canals. Sometimes earwax accumulates and causes problems such as hearing loss, itchiness, or even pain. Our ENT physicians and audiology team are experts in removing earwax with minimal discomfort and trauma to the ear canal skin.

CAUSES

- ▶ Insufficient cleaning
- ▶ Overproduction of earwax
- ▶ Narrow ear canal
- ▶ Infectious disease (such as swimmer's ear)

SHOULD YOU CLEAN YOUR EARS?

- ▶ Earwax is healthy in normal amounts and serves to coat the skin of the ear canal where it acts as temporary water repellent. The absence of earwax may result in dry and itchy ears. In most cases, ear canals are self cleaning; there is a slow and orderly migration of ear canal skin from the eardrum to the ear opening. Old earwax is consistently transported from the ear canal to the ear opening where it dries, flakes, and falls out. Under ideal circumstances, you should never have to clean your ear canals. If you want to clean your ears, you should wash the external ear with a cloth over your finger but do not insert anything into the ear canal.
- ▶ Wax is not formed in the deep part of the ear canal near the eardrum, only forming in the outer part of the canal. When there is a wax blockage against the eardrum, it is because the patient has been probing his ear with such things as cotton-tipped applicators, bobby pins, or twisted napkin corners. These objects push the wax in deeper. The skin of the ear canal and eardrum are very thin and fragile, and can easily be injured.

SYMPTOMS

- ▶ Pain in the ear
- ▶ Constant ringing noise
- ▶ Reduced hearing ability
- ▶ Cough
- ▶ Dizziness
- ▶ Feeling of fullness in the affected ear

TREATMENT

Ear wax removal can be completed by using one of the following methods:

- ▶ **Suction:** A small suction device can be used to pull out the wax from ear.
- ▶ **Flushing:** The wax is softened and using a syringe and water, the wax can be safely removed.
- ▶ **Curet:** This is a small instrument used to pull out the wax. This must be done by a professional to not damage the ear canal or eardrum.

This procedure can be completed in minutes. The treatment is usually painless. If the wax is deepened and impacted, there may be minor discomfort.