

Wax is a normal secretion which protects the ear canal from debris and infection. Only when there is a build-up of wax removal maybe required. A build up occurs more frequently in older people, hearing aid users, people who insert objects into the ear canal (cotton buds etc) and also as a result of hereditary factors. The amount of wax varies from person to person.

Excessive wax only becomes a problem if it causes severe deafness, pain or if your clinician requires a clear view of your ear drum.

You will need to see a GP or Minor Illness nurse if:

- You have pain, sudden deafness or buzzing in the ear
- A history of ear drum perforation or previous surgeries
- Symptoms of infection in the ear-usually pain and smelly discharge
- Foreign body in the ear

We at Fireclay Health will not offer manual irrigation to remove wax unless your GP/Minor Illness nurse has requested for clinical reasons. Fireclay Health recommends the following OLIVE OIL drop regime which can be purchased from your local pharmacy.

It is **essential** that **olive oil** is put into the ear canal **twice daily for at least 2-3 weeks** (Over the counter brands such as Earex etc are NOT recommended as they irritate the lining of the ear canal).

When using olive oil:

1. Lie on your side with the affected ear uppermost
2. Pull the pinna (outer ear) backwards & upwards
3. Drop 2 or 3 drops of olive oil, at room temperature, into the ear canal and massage the area just in front of the ear (droppers can be bought from the chemist)
4. Remain lying down for 5 minutes and then wipe away any excess oil. **DO NOT** leave cotton wool at the entrance to the ear as this draws the oil back out
5. Repeat the procedure with the opposite ear if necessary

Unfortunately the NHS no longer funds GP practices to provide ear syringing/irrigation to patients with earwax. However, we as a practice feel that it is an important service to be able to offer, but only in the very specific circumstances as outlined above. In order to preserve this service we need to be sure that only those patients who meet the clinical criteria are offered these appointments.