



CERUMEN IMPACTION

Ear wax, or cerumen, is made by the glands in the outer third of the ear canal. It protects the skin of the human ear canal, assists in cleaning and lubrication, and also provides some protection from bacteria, fungi, insects and water. Cerumen and old skin of the ear canal makes its way out of the ear canal in a “conveyor belt” fashion, taking with it any dirt, dust, and particulate matter that may have gathered in the canal. Jaw movement assists this process by dislodging debris attached to the walls of the ear canal, increasing the likelihood of its expulsion.

Excess or impacted cerumen can press against the eardrum and/or occlude the external auditory canal and impair hearing. Q-tips are usually not advised for ear cleaning. Please see below for techniques to remove the cerumen. Please note that if you have a perforation, or hole, in your eardrum the following should not be performed.

- 1) Turn your head to the side and gently fill the ear canal with baby oil or mineral oil using an eyedropper. Allow the oil to soak in for 1-2 minutes, then turn over and do the same procedure for the other ear.
- 2) Do this once or twice a day for three to four days, allowing the wax to soften.
- 3) Then, fill the ear canals with 3% hydrogen peroxide using an eyedropper, allowing the fluid to bubble out the wax that is present. Turn your head over to the other side and allow the peroxide to run out.
- 4) For stubborn ear impactions, it may be necessary to be seen by your physician to have the impaction removed using the microscope and micro-instrumentation.

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