What’s the Best Way to Clean My Ears?

Earwax, or cerumen, is made by glands in the outer third of the ear canal. It protects the skin of the ear canal, assists in cleaning and lubrication, and provides 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 wall of the ear canal. When earwax accumulates and blocks the ear canal, it can cause problems such as pain, itching, fullness, odor, drainage, and hearing loss. Approximately 12 million individuals in the US have excessive earwax blocking the ear canal.

If the wax becomes hard and ear canal blocked, the best way to treat the wax is to place a few drops of mineral oil into the affected ear canal for 1-2 minutes to soften the wax. After the oil has oozed out, use an eyedropper to fill the ear canal with 3% hydrogen peroxide. Turn your head over to the other side after about one minute to allow the solution to bubble out the wax that is present. This may be performed for your other ear as well. For stubborn cerumen impactions, it may be necessary to visit your physician and have this removed.

Updated features:
» Capturing voices in both ears: Unique Binaural VoiceStream Technology™ detects the speech signal and ensures that you can hear it clearly in both ears. This means that you will understand better in more listening situations.
» Some devices include a “built-in” feature designed to reduce the annoyance of your tinnitus while simultaneously improving your hearing ability.
» Speech in Wind – When wearing hearing aids wind noise interferes with speech understanding and listening comfort. With the Speech in Wind feature, instruments can enhance your ability to understand speech well, even when the wind is blowing.*
» auto StereoZoom – When noise reaches a level that makes understanding one person in a crowd difficult, auto StereoZoom is automatically activated, allowing you to focus on the voice you want to hear.*

*Research has shown an increase in speech understanding of up to 40% in wind and 45% in noise.

Water Fun! How To Protect Your Ears While Swimming

Custom swim molds are designed for patients with conditions affecting the middle ear space (eardrum perforation, pressure equalization tube, frequent ear infections). They are molded to comfortably keep water out of the ears during swimming or showering, eliminating potential irritation or infection from pool water or lake water. Swim molds are floatable, available in a variety of colors, and can also be used as noise protection. Schedule an appointment to protect your ears today – it’s quick and easy!
Outdoor Activities that Affect Your Hearing

Your parents had the right idea when you were growing up: cover your ears when there’s something you don’t want to hear. This simple act not only muffles sound, it can actually prevent hearing loss. And since much of hearing loss is due to environmental factors like noise pollution – covering your ears when you hear loud noises is not a bad idea.

Fortunately, you don’t have to use your hands to cover your ears today. Earplugs and/or earmuffs are readily available to deaden environmental noise. Earplugs can reduce noise levels by as much as 35 decibels (dB), earmuffs by as much as 22 dB. When sound is excessively loud, you may want to use them together.

The Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) sets safe noise levels at 85 dB. Here are some instances when you’ll want to protect your hearing – as well as the reasons why.

1. **Lawn mowers.** A typical lawn mower emits a noise level of 85-90 dB, a leaf blower is slightly higher at 100 dB. Hearing damage occurs in eight hours at this level.

2. **Planning a day of play on a powerboat;** protect your hearing. Noise levels for this type of watercraft can exceed 90 dB. Many parks and recreation departments are beginning to set safe levels for this type of watercraft; however, it’s always safe to take along earplugs just in case.

3. **Get your motor running.** Head out on the highway by way of motorcycle can be one of life’s greatest pleasures, as well as one of your ears’ greatest dangers. Many big bikes register noise levels in excess of 95 dB, with hearing damage occurring in 4 hours. Make sure your protective gear includes earplugs beneath that helmet.

4. **It’s only rock and roll.** Chamber music in a small, indoor auditorium measures 75-80 dB, music generated at a rock concert can measure 120 dB. At this level, hearing damage can occur in 7.5 minutes. Whenever possible, choose outdoor venues where the noise has room to dissipate and stay away from the speakers.

Keep in mind most noise induced hearing loss (NIHL) is cumulative and takes place over a long period of time, which is why it’s important to protect your ears from excessively loud environments. If you have to shout to be heard by the person standing next to you or notice your ears are ringing after exposure, your environment is too noisy and you need to take precautions.

If you feel your hearing may have been affected by exposure to loud noise it is recommended that you schedule a hearing evaluation. To learn about the options for custom earplugs, contact The Hearing Center @ 972-566-7359.

FAQs Regarding Extended Wear (Lyric) Hearing Aids

**Who is a good Candidate for Lyric?**

Lyric is designed for people with mild to moderately-severe hearing loss. Our audiologists will assess hearing loss, ear size and shape, medical conditions, and lifestyle to determine if Lyric is the right choice. Approximately half of the people with hearing loss may be Lyric candidates. Lyric is great for patients who desire a low maintenance, discrete hearing device.

**How does Lyric Work?**

Lyric is comfortably placed in the ear canal by one of our audiologists during a routine office visit. Once placed, Lyric is 100% invisible, worn continuously for months at a time, and uses the ear’s natural anatomy to deliver exceptional sound quality. Individual replacement needs will vary as device battery life is subject to individual ear conditions.

**How is the cost of Lyric different from daily wear/traditional hearing aid options?**

Lyric is sold on a subscription basis, meaning patients will purchase one year of Lyric hearing at a time. There is no need for repairs or battery replacement. Patients will be guaranteed to have the most advanced Lyric technology currently available, since they will be receiving new Lyric devices throughout the year. Contact The Hearing Center to discuss exact pricing and payment options.

**Does Lyric require any surgery?**

Lyric is NOT a surgically implanted device. Lyric is placed and programmed in the office by an audiologist at The Hearing Center. No anesthesia is required. The sizing and fitting process for Lyric takes about one hour.

**Can patients take the Lyric Hearing Device out?**

Lyric can be self-removed if necessary. Patients are provided with a removal tool. Once Lyric is removed it can only be reinserted by a hearing professional.

**Can patients swim with Lyric?**

Swimming and diving underwater are not recommended. However, Lyric is water resistant and showering can be done while wearing Lyric.*

**Can I use my cell phone, home phone, or earbuds while wearing Lyric?**

Yes, one of the benefits of Lyric’s placement is that it can be worn while talking on the cell phone or home phone. In fact, Lyric can be worn during your daily activities – such as sleeping, showering, exercising, and using headphones.

*Lyric is water resistant, not waterproof, and should not be completely submerged under water.