

KING CROSS PRACTICE

Patient Information Leaflet for Ear Care

King Cross Practice no longer offers routine ear irrigation (syringing), as evidence suggests this procedure may not be as safe as we thought. Although our ear irrigation service was always undertaken by trained staff, this could result in inflamed and infected ear canals. We understand that irrigation should rarely be necessary. The most effective way to manage ear canal blockage due to wax is the application of olive oil, which should disperse excessive wax. Olive oil and a pipet for application should be purchased over the counter from your local pharmacy.

Wax is normal – it protects and lubricates the Ear Canal. It is a mixture of Cerumen (a sweat-like substance), Sebum (an oily substance) both secreted by glands in your Ear Canal, which combines with dust, debris, hair etc. to form ear wax. It is normal to have ear wax, and it usually only becomes a problem when it has been pushed deeper into the Ear Canal. Your ears are self-cleaning – if you use cotton wool buds or similar objects, to try to remove the wax, it will only be pushed further into the ear canal and become impacted and block your ear.

Dispersing the build-up of wax

- In most cases olive oil used for an extended period of time will disperse the buildup of wax.
- The oil should be at room temperature before use.
- Lie on your side with the affected ear uppermost and place two drops into the ear canal. Let the drops soak in for at least 5 minutes.
- Repeat twice a day for at least **2 weeks** to the affected ear until the wax has gone and your hearing improves. You can continue for a further 1 – 2 weeks for maximum effect
- Cotton-buds or ear candles should not be used as these can damage the ear canal and drum.

If after **4 weeks** you still feel you have blocked ears then please call the surgery for an appointment to assess your ears.

General Ear Care Advice

- If you have ear problems such as dry skin, eczema, dermatitis, 'runny ears', you will find keeping your ears DRY will improve the condition. Avoid shampoo, shower gel and hairspray etc. in your ears.
- The easiest way to keep your ears dry when bathing or showering is by using ear plugs or a piece of cotton-wool smeared with Vaseline/Petroleum jelly.
- Once weekly application of 2 drops of olive oil may prevent the build-up of wax.

If at any time you are experiencing pain, worsening deafness or an unpleasant smelling discharge you should stop using the oil and consult a doctor or nurse at the surgery.

Private Providers of Ear Irrigation

Not affiliated with or stated as recommendations from the practice. Charges will apply.

- Specsavers (Huddersfield) 01484 544566
- Specsavers (Bradford) 01274 618847
- Hearing Check & Bupa (Sowerby Bridge) 01422 756015