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| **Ongoing self-care**If your ears are regularly becoming blocked with wax, after clearing the blockage, it is suggested that you use olive oil drops as above around once a week to keep the wax soft and encourage the natural process of wax expulsion. *This information is based on recommendations from the Rotherham Primary Ear Care Centre* [*www.earcarecentre.com*](http://www.earcarecentre.com) *and Twyford Surgery (Practice leaflet Jan 2017)* |   **DOC-0126 / 20.01.17** | **NHS England no longer recommends syringing to remove ear wax.**Increased adverse effects have been reported including: perforation of eardrum, pain, discomfort or bleeding during syringing, increased risk of infection, and irritation of the ear canal causing increased wax production. Some suggestions for self-management of ear wax are included in this leaflet. **Ear Wax** **Representing:- Dorset LMC- Hampshire & Isle of Wight LMC- Wiltshire LMC****Supporting:- Jersey, Guernsey & Alderney GPs**  |
| **Ear Wax** * Ear wax is normal it provides protection for your ears
* Your ears are self-cleaning
* The movement of your jaw while eating and talking moves the wax along the canal
* Ear wax only becomes a problem if it causes deafness, pain or if a health professional needs a clear view of the ear drum

**What makes ear wax worse?*** The amount of wax produced varies from person to person
* Some people produce excessive amounts of wax and this can block the ear canal
* Wearing a hearing aid, ear plugs and or head phones can interfere with wax expulsion
* Narrow and or hairy ear canals
* If you are elderly – the wax produced may be harder and drier
* Dry skin in people who suffer with eczema or psoriasis

**What you shouldn’t do, some suggestions!*** Do not use cotton buds to clean the ear. This forces the wax deeper into the canal and can cause damage, trauma and possible infection
* Do not use objects such as matches, hair grips, crochet hooks, knitting needles, keys etc. this can cause trauma and possible infection
* If your ears are itchy do not scratch or rub them with your finger nails or any other objects
* Do not use anything smaller than your elbow in your ear!!
 | **What helps?*** Try and keep your ears dry. When washing your hair, showering or swimming putting some Vaseline around the inner part of your ear can help
* Don’t put your head under the water when bathing
* If you regularly get blocked ears, use olive oil drops weekly

**When to contact your GP surgery**If you are experiencing the following symptoms:* Pain
* Discharge or bleeding from the ear
* Sudden deafness
* Dizziness
* Foreign bodies (you may be advised to attend A&E)

**What you can do to manage the problem?*** If you are **no**t experiencing **any** of the symptoms above, the following is recommended:
* **Olive Oil Drops/Spray** – It is recommended that this is done 2-3 times daily for at least 3-7 days [www.earcarecentre.com/Patients/Earcare/Wax](http://www.earcarecentre.com/Patients/Earcare/Wax)
1. Lie on your side with the affected ear uppermost
2. Pull the outer ear gently backwards and upwards to straighten the ear canal
3. Put 2-3 drops of olive oil into the affected ear(s) and gently massage just in front of the ear
4. Stay lying on your side for 10 minutes to allow the wax to soak up the oil

   | 1. Afterwards, wipe away any excess oil but do not plug your ear with cotton wool as this simply absorbs the oil
2. Your hearing problem may initially worsen after first starting to use the olive oil drops; this is why you are advised to concentrate on treating one ear at a time if both ears are blocked with wax.
3. In most cases, the wax will have softened sufficiently to encourage the wax to come out without further intervention.
4. If ear wax continues to be a problem ear assessment and micro-suctioning is available at most large hearing centres.

**Self-irrigation** There are a number of over-the-counter kits available from pharmacies. These contain a wax softener as drops which you use for 3-4 days and a small bulb syringe to enable you to remove the wax from your ear canals yourself. Patients are advised that there is very little clinical based research available on self-irrigation. Care needs to be taken to ensure there is no trauma and or infection as result of self-irrigation. Are they the same thing as the CCGs or the BMA?No. CCGs are different. They are commissioning bodies which mean they are involved in designing, purchasing and monitoring patient care. They are membership organisations but CCGs are answerable to the government as well as GPs. LMCs are advisers and are only answerable back to their GPs The BMA is the national voice of doctors and GPs. They negotiate on matters at a national level. They are a trade union which confers special legal connotations. Who are LMCs representing GPs to? They represent General Practice to everyone around GPs at a local level. That may be working with Area Teams, CCGs, RCGP, the LETB (Deanery) or charities. They can iron out misunderstandings and help engender mutual understanding. LMCs also offer other non-clinical services from expertise around disciplinary issues, contract changes to medico-legal issues e.g. Data Protection Act interpretation and sometimes education and training. They are experts at the time when you can’t think of anyone else who would know the answer.Are they the same thing as the CCGs or the BMA?No. CCGs are different. They are commissioning bodies which mean they are involved in designing, purchasing and monitoring patient care. They are membership organisations but CCGs are answerable to the government as well as GPs. LMCs are advisers and are only answerable back to their GPs The BMA is the national voice of doctors and GPs. They negotiate on matters at a national level. They are a trade union which confers special legal connotations. Who are LMCs representing GPs to? They represent General Practice to everyone around GPs at a local level. That may be working with Area Teams, CCGs, RCGP, the LETB (Deanery) or charities. They can iron out misunderstandings and help engender mutual understanding. LMCs also offer other non-clinical services from expertise around disciplinary issues, contract changes to medico-legal issues e.g. Data Protection Act interpretation and sometimes education and training. They are experts at the time when you can’t think of anyone else who would know the answer.**How do I get your services?**If you work as a GP partner, a salaried GP or as a trainee in a practice you will be covered by the practice (who pay a levy). If you are a locum then you need to pay a subscription of £100 annually but for **all local GP trainees we offer the first year post qualification free.****Locums can receive our e-mails free of charge****Send us your name, e-mail address, GMC number and CCT date to office@wessexlmcs.org.uk**Are they the same thing as the CCGs or the BMA?No. CCGs are different. They are commissioning bodies which means they are involved in designing, purchasing and monitoring patient care. They are membership organisations but CCGs are answerable to the government as well as GPs. LMCs are advisers and are only answerable back to their GPs The BMA is the national voice of doctors and GPs. They negotiate on matters at a national level. They are a trade union which confers special legal connotations. Who are LMCs representing GPs to? They represent General Practice to everyone around GPs at a local level. That may be working with Area Teams, CCGs, RCGP, the LETB (Deanery) or charities. They can iron out misunderstandings and help engender mutual understanding. LMCs also offer other non-clinical services from expertise around disciplinary issues, contract changes to medico-legal issues e.g. Data Protection Act interpretation and sometimes education and training. They are experts at the time when you can’t think of anyone else who would know the answer.**How do I get your services?**If you work as a GP partner, a salaried GP or as a trainee in a practice you will be covered by the practice (who pay a levy). If you are a locum then you need to pay a subscription of £100 annually but for **all local GP trainees we offer the first year post qualification free.****Locums can receive our e-mails free of charge****Send us your name, e-mail address, GMC number and CCT date to office@wessexlmcs.org.uk** |