

Can You Ear Me?

A Patient Guide to Ear Care



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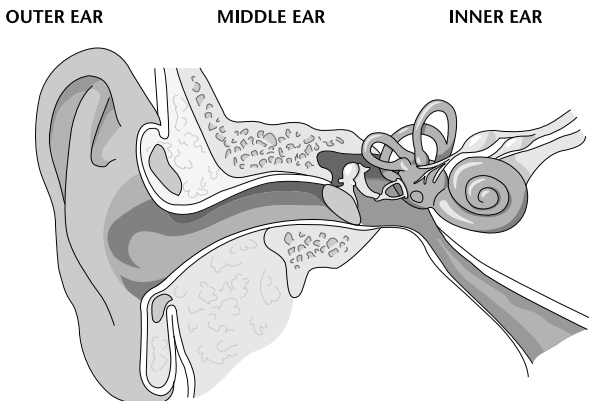
Did you know?

- The formation of wax in our ears is normal, as it protects and lubricates the ear
- If the wax accumulates it blocks the ear canal and this results in the loss of hearing
- Wax should be soft to allow it to move towards the outer ear
- Should the wax harden, it is advisable to use oil to soften the wax

How your ears work

Your ear is made up of the inner ear, middle and outer ear:

- The outer ear is made up of cartilage, ear canal and your ear drum.
- There are many functions of your ear including hearing, balance and position of your head.



- Wax can build up in the ear canal, sometimes pressing on the ear drum. This can cause discomfort.
- Soften and expand. This needs to happen to enable the wax to move out of the ear without causing damage. Please continue to apply the oil until the wax is removed.

How to take care of your ears

- Never insert anything into your ears, for example matchsticks, hairpins, paperclips, cotton buds which can do serious damage
- Avoid prolonged exposure to loud noises or music
- Cover your ears if you are working in a noisy or dusty environment
- Use an ear wax softener (Olive Oil is recommended) when ear wax has built up and follow instructions in this leaflet
- Use ear wax softener once a month after wax has cleared to help prevent further build up of wax

Applying Olive Oil to ear(s)

- The use of ordinary olive oil to blocked ears will soften the wax and cause it to move to the outer ear naturally
- Oil should be used at room temperature: **do not heat** the oil before use
- Visit a Community Pharmacy where the Pharmacist could prescribe Olive oil ear drops under the Pharmacy First Service if it is the most suitable product for your condition
- Apply 5-7 Olive Oil drops 3-4 times daily to the affected ear(s) for a period of 2 weeks

Guidance on use

- Lie on your side with the affected ear upwards
- Pull the ear back and upwards
- Apply 5-7 drops to the affected ear
- Wipe away any excess oil from ear lobe down
- Rest for 5-10 minutes before repeating the process in the other ear, this will allow the oil to soften the wax

- Repeat 3-4 times daily for at least 2 weeks
- Do not put cotton wool into your ears as this will absorb the oil and prevent it from working
- Using Olive Oil is the safest way to clean your ears. Sometimes the use of oil causes hearing loss to become worse initially. This is because the oil is causing the wax to soften and expand. This needs to happen to enable the wax to move out of the ear without causing damage
- Please continue to apply oil until the wax is removed

What to expect at an ear assessment

You will be asked if you have ever had any ear problems in the past. Common questions you will be asked include:

- Had problems with ear irrigation?
- Suffered a perforated eardrum?
- Had any discharge from your ears?
- Suffered from earache?
- Had or do you have a cleft palate?
- Had ear surgery?
- Are you Diabetic?
- Do you have any hearing aids?
- Are you attending Audiology?



Ear assessment

An ear examination for impacted wax and advice using Olive Oil eardrops may be given before considering irrigation. Ear irrigation is only considered if the use of ear drops is unsuccessful. You will be asked to sign a consent form prior to irrigation and the risks will be explained to you.

Ear irrigation is not performed routinely due to risks associated with the procedure. If you have hearing in one ear only or have had previous ear surgery then irrigation cannot be undertaken. If used correctly, oil should successfully remove impacted wax.

Possible complications following ear irrigation

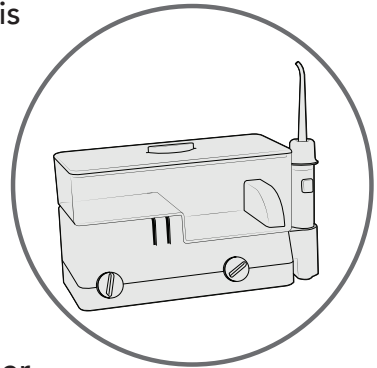
The following have been reported after ear irrigation:

- Failure to remove earwax
- Permanent loss of hearing
- Infection Perforation of eardrum
- Damage to structure within the ear
- Pain
- Heart attack
- Vertigo
- Worsening of pre-existing tinnitus (noises in your ear that come from an internal source)
- Sometimes, light bleeding may occur, but it usually stops on its own
- Nausea and vomiting and vertigo have also been reported by some patients

What to expect of ear irrigation

Should you require ear irrigation, this is usually carried out by a nurse in the Community Treatment and Care (CTAC) Service or in your home by a Community Nurse if you have difficulty getting out

A machine is used to direct water into your ear. This procedure usually results in any wax being removed. The wax is collected in a small container.



Where your ear assessment will take place

Ear Assessment and Care for blocked ears is now provided by the Community Treatment and Care Service. CTAC is formerly known as Treatment Room Services.

This nurse-led service provides a specialist range of treatment and care, some of which you may have received previously at your GP Practice.

Your GP Practice will be kept up to date on your treatment and involved in your care; should it be necessary.

The Community Treatment and Care Team work alongside GPs.

What does this mean for patients?

Patients will benefit from access to expertly trained nursing staff in our Community Treatment and Care settings for assessment and ear care.

How to access this service?

Across Greater Glasgow & Clyde there are various CTAC sites within Inverclyde, East Renfrewshire, Renfrewshire, East Dunbartonshire, West Dunbartonshire, and Glasgow City. Further details can be found on page 9 of this leaflet. Should you need this service, our CTAC staff will welcome you with care.

Community Treatment and Care (CTAC) sites are available across NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde

Inverclyde HSPC

 www.inverclyde.gov.uk/health-and-social-care

East Renfrewshire HSCP

 www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/about-hscp

Renfrewshire HSCP

 www.renfrewshire.hspc.scot

East Dunbartonshire HSCP

 www.eastdunbarton.gov.uk/health-and-social-care

West Dunbartonshire HSCP

 www.wdhscp.or.uk

Glasgow City HSCP

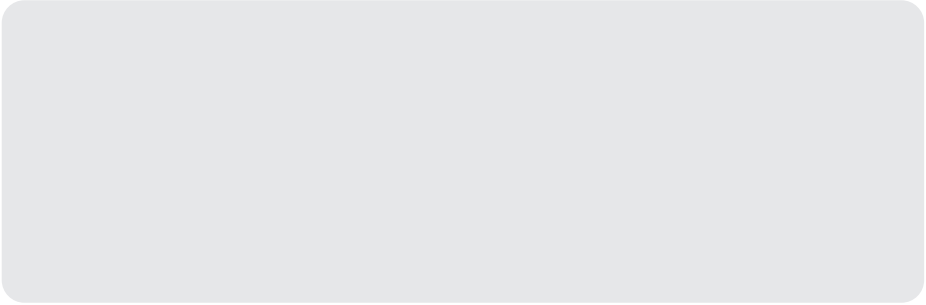
 www.gsgowcity.hscp.scot

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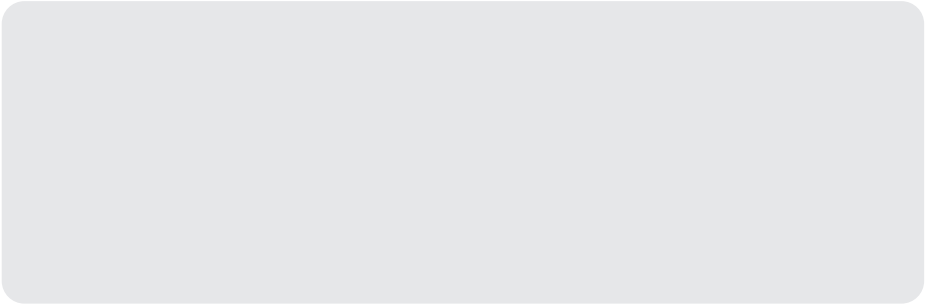


Our Community Treatment and Care Services will welcome you with care.

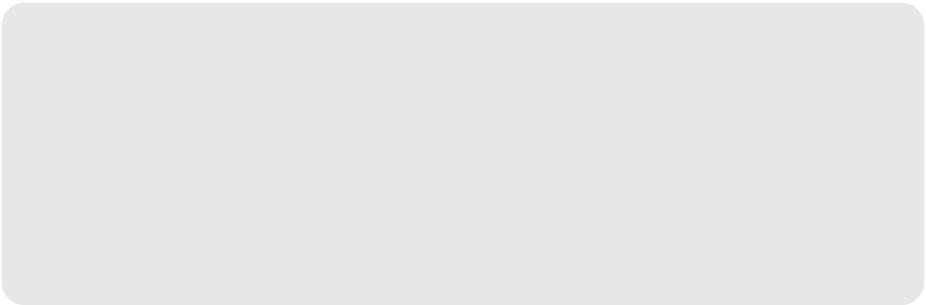
Record any questions you might have:



Record any Appointments:



For more information, please contact:



Additional Useful Information

NHS inform

 **www.nhsinform.scot**

 **0800 22 44 88**

