Ear wax

Ear canal cleans itself with a waxy secretion called cerumen. Cerumen is resistant to water, sticky (to trap dust) and migrates out of the ear canal to self-clean the ear. Sometimes, the wax builds up and causes symptoms, including mild deafness and a sensation of fullness inside the ear. This condition is harmless and easily treated. In some cases, the wax build-up loosens and falls out by itself without the need for intervention.

Symptoms of wax build up

- Mild deafness
- Sensation of fullness in the ear
- Itching

Ear wax


More

- Ear wax symptoms
- Ear wax causes
- Ear wax removal

Tags:
- Ear wax
- Ear wax - Ear basics
Wax keeps the ears clean

The skin lining the ear canal contains glands that produce cerumen. This yellow or brown substance protects the tissues, and helps prevent infection by trapping micro-organisms, dirt and other irritants.

Risk factors for ear wax blockage

Some people are more prone to ear wax blockage that others. Risk factors include:

- cattle or horses
- nosebleeds
- certain foods like nuts, chocolate and grapefruit
- working in dusty or dirty environments
- narrow ear canals
- hairy ear canals
- working in environments where there are high levels of noise
- working in environments where there are extremes of heat or cold
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Tinnitus

Tinnitus cannot be cured, but it can be managed with some lifestyle changes...

Hearing loss

Deafness - a range of causes

Deafness is caused by many different events including injury, disease and genetic defects...

Ears - ways to protect your hearing

Once hearing is damaged, it often can’t be restored...

Hearing loss - auditory neuropathy

Auditory neuropathy is hearing loss caused by a disruption of nerve impulses travelling from the inner ear to the brain...

Hearing loss - communication in the workplace

If you are unsure how to best communicate with a colleague who has a hearing impairment, ask them...

Hearing loss - how it affects people

Many people with hearing loss experience a drop in self-esteem and confidence because of their impaired ability to communicate...

Hearing loss - lipreading

Lipreading can help people who are hearing impaired to cope better with their hearing loss...

Hearing problems - hyperacusis

Reduced sound tolerance can confine a person to their home, affect their career and social life, and make everyday activities impossible...

Hearing problems in children

The earlier that hearing loss is identified in children, the better for the child’s language, learning and overall development...

Hearing tests

A ringing sensation in the ears (tinnitus), or people complaining that you talk too loudly are signs you may need to have your hearing checked...

Sign language - Auslan

Like any language, Auslan continues to evolve to meet the communication needs of people who are deaf...

Nose conditions

Adenoids

Since adenoids are constantly in the path of germs, infections are common...

Anosmia - loss of smell

People are less sensitive to smells the older they get, and women tend to have a more acute sense of smell than men...

Nosebleeds

Bleeding from the nose is common in children and is usually not severe or serious...

Polyps

Nasal polyps can sometimes interfere with breathing...

Sinusitis

If you suffer from sinusitis, it’s important to see if there is any trigger which can be treated...

Throat conditions

Croup

Croup is a viral infection of the throat and windpipe that causes noisy breathing, a hoarse voice and a harsh, barking cough...

Larynx

Prolonged exposure to air pollutants, such as dust, can irritate the larynx and cause chronic laryngitis...

Rheumatic fever

Untreated rheumatic fever can lead to serious complications such as rheumatic heart disease...

Sleep apnoea

A person with sleep apnoea may wake hundreds of times every night...

Streptococcal infection - group A

Streptococcal infection - group A can cause sore throats (pharyngitis), scarlet fever or impetigo (school sores)...

Throat cancer

Risk factors for throat cancer include smoking and heavy alcohol consumption...

Tonsillitis

Because most attacks of tonsillitis are caused by viruses, most of the treatment is aimed at helping to relieve the symptoms...

Related Information

Ear problems in children

Babies and young children are more likely to develop middle ear infections because they are still building up their immunity...

Benign paroxysmal positional vertigo (BPPV)

Benign paroxysmal positional vertigo (BPPV) is a condition characterised by episodes of sudden and severe vertigo...

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Ears

The brain uses the inner ear, the eyes and muscles to pinpoint the position of the body at all times...

Acoustic neuroma

In its earlier stages, an acoustic neuroma can present similar symptoms to other, less serious conditions, which may delay diagnosis and treatment...

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