

Ear Wax (Cerumen)

Wax can be a problem for some people when it builds up and stops up the ear canal. If the wax cannot be removed after a week or so using the methods described below, a trip to your ENT doctor to remove the wax in the office may be necessary.

DO NOT USE Q-TIPS!! You may have heard the adage: "Never stick anything smaller than your elbow in your ear." Although humorous, this is a good rule of thumb. They can pack the wax into the ear canal. This can lead to infection, ear drum injury, or other problems.

To gently and safely remove wax, you can use an over the counter wax removal kit, or follow the directions below:

Put a dropperful of hydrogen peroxide in the ear canal. It will foam and bubble while it is dissolving the wax. Let it sit for a minute or two, then tilt your head and let the peroxide run out onto a washcloth, paper towel, etc. If you have time, repeat this 2-3 times. After you have drained out the peroxide, add a few drops of mineral oil. This will help soften the wax. Repeat this process 1-2 times/day depending on the severity of the wax impaction.

For daily ear cleansing, or to help with mild ear infection/itching:

Mix a capful of white vinegar with a capful of peroxide (Use only white vinegar--Do NOT use apple cider, red wine or any other type of vinegar). Use a dropper to place several drops of the peroxide/vinegar solution in the ear canal after showering, swimming, etc. Some people like using rubbing alcohol for this purpose. This is OK, but causes many people discomfort and tends to dry the ears, so we do not routinely recommend it.