

BARBAUHLAW MEDICAL PRACTICE

EAR SYRINGING

Instillation of Olive or Almond Oil – avoid if nut allergy

If you have, or have had in the past, problems such as perforated ear drum, mastoid surgery or chronic ear infections, you should speak to your GP for advice prior to using olive or almond oil or syringing.

This is our first choice and preferred method. Irrigation has a greater risk of ear damage such as infection or perforated ear drum.

If you *think* you have a problem due to ear wax, you should have your ears checked by the Nurse or GP first.

If you *know* you have a wax problem, and you have had no other problems with your ears, you should try using the olive or almond oil method.

Over-the-counter preparations bought from the Pharmacy may also be used.

Pour half a teaspoon or dropper of olive or almond oil (at room temperature) into the affected ear(s) twice a day for 2 weeks. Hold the affected side uppermost for 5-10 minutes to allow the oil to soak into the wax. Try not to plug the ear with cotton wool as the oil will just soak into it rather than the wax. If you wish to use cotton wool, use petroleum jelly to prevent absorption of the oil.

Sometimes the use of oil can make your ear feel worse as it softens the wax. This should pass in a few days.

In most cases the wax will come out on its own after 2 weeks. If you feel that you still have a problem, make an appointment to see the Practice Nurse. The Nurse may advise you to continue using the oil for longer before considering syringing.

Use a few drops of oil on a regular basis to prevent further build up of wax.

We do not recommend irrigation routinely as this can be associated with failure of wax removal, perforation of ear drum, outer ear infection, damage to external canal, pain, deafness, vertigo and tinnitus.

However, if you require irrigation, ear wax must be softened with oil prior to irrigation. To soften, use olive oil or almond oil, as instructed above for at least 2 weeks.