

## DO NOT FORGET:

- It is not advisable to leave cotton wool in your ear.
- If you have drops prescribed by your doctor or nurse complete the course of treatment.

If you experience any difficulty, please contact:

Primary Ear Care & Audiology Services  
Rotherham Community Health Services  
Community Health Centre  
Greasbrough Road  
ROTHERHAM  
South Yorkshire S60 1RY

Tel No: 01709 423207

E-mail: [rgh-tr.earcarecentre@nhs.net](mailto:rgh-tr.earcarecentre@nhs.net)

### We value your comments:

If you have any comments or concerns about the care we have provided, please let us know, or, alternatively, you can write to:

Patient Services, The Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust  
Rotherham Hospital, Moorgate Road  
Oakwood, Rotherham S60 2UD

Telephone: 01709 424461

November 2018

## Ear Care & Audiology Services



## Irrigation

### Advice for Patients

Winners: Care of Older People Nursing Times Award 2017  
Highly Commended: Innovation in your Speciality,  
Nursing Times Award 2009  
Winners: National Training Award 2006  
Primary Care Professional, Outstanding Achiever Award  
Health & Social Care Awards 2004

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## BEFORE IRRIGATION

In order to soften ear wax prior to removal, most patients find that applying 1-2 drops of room-temperature olive oil for 3-4 nights prior to an appointment is helpful.

It is easier if you use a dropper or an olive oil ear spray. Do not use cotton wool following insertion of the oil as it will soak it up. Only use the wool to wipe away any excess from around the outer ear.

Sodium bicarbonate drops can be effective but may dry the lining of the ear canal.

Almond oil also effective – but should be avoided if you have a nut allergy.

Remember that ears are self-cleaning and that wax is important in protecting them.

Some patients may perceive their tinnitus to be worse following irrigation. If you are concerned please discuss this beforehand with your nurse or audiologist

Don't forget to tell the nurse if you have:

- had a perforation
- a history of mucoidal discharge in the last year
- had a middle ear infection in the last 6 weeks
- had problems following irrigation previously
- had previous ear surgery
- pain/tenderness of the ear at the time of your appointment

## FOLLOWING IRRIGATION

- Keep your ears dry for a few days, especially when bathing and swimming
- Do not use cotton buds in your ears for any reason – apart from the negative drying qualities of the wool, the cotton bud itself may become detached and lodge itself in your ear canal, requiring removal by a nurse

If your ear starts to discharge or becomes painful you should ring for an appointment with a nurse

If you came because you are having difficulty hearing and it doesn't improve following wax removal you should seek further advice

If a perforation of the eardrum is found following irrigation, you will be informed. The nurse will ensure that the water is thoroughly mopped from your canal and will advise you to keep your ears dry. Do not swim, bathe or shower without swim plugs or cotton wool covered in Vaseline

The nurse may contact your GP or, if a prescriber, give you prophylactic systemic antibiotics. You will be advised to return for a review

If you have continued problems with excessive wax it may be beneficial to use 1-2 drops of olive oil each month. This will not prevent wax forming, but will make removal easier.