

## Removing Ear Wax

Ear wax protects your ear canal by trapping dust and inhibiting the growth of bacteria and fungus. Too much wax can cause gradual hearing loss, a feeling of fullness in your ears, earache, or a rattling or ringing sound in your ears.

### Steps to remove excess wax

- Soften the wax by applying a few drops of baby oil, mineral oil, or glycerin with an eye dropper twice a day for several days. Or use an over-the-counter wax softener, like Debrox or Murine, which contains a mild type of peroxide.
- Fill a 3 ounce rubber bulb syringe with body-temperature water.
- With your head upright, pull the top of your outer ear up and back. With your other hand gently squirt the water into your ear canal. Turn your head and drain the water into a sink or bowl. You may need to repeat this several times before the wax falls out, usually in the form of a plug. Stop if pain occurs.
- Tip your head to the side to drain the inner ear. Then towel dry your outer ear.

If you have difficulty removing wax, talk with your clinician. *A word of caution:* Do not attempt to flush wax out of your ears if you've had a perforated eardrum, surgery, and/or severe ear pain, unless your clinician approves. **Also, do not use Q-tips in your ear canal.** They can traumatize the sensitive skin, pack wax, and make it more difficult to remove.

Taken from the Mayo Clinic Health Letter

Check our website: [www.uhs.berkeley.edu](http://www.uhs.berkeley.edu) to learn more about this medical concern or others.

For an appointment [www.uhs.berkeley.edu](http://www.uhs.berkeley.edu) or call **510-642-2000** Clinic Nurse **510-643-7197** for advice

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