



Microsuction

This leaflet provides information about **microsuction**. If you have any questions or anxieties please discuss them with an ENT member of staff. It is not intended to replace your discussion with the practitioner, but may highlight starting points for discussion.

True or false?

'Ears need to be cleaned regularly to keep healthy.' **FALSE**

Ear wax does not generate a problem unless it builds up and blocks the ear canal. Build-up of wax is not down to poor hygiene, instead its primary function is to protect. Ear wax assists the self-cleaning mechanism within your ears, trapping the dirt and dead skin cells, migrating this out of the ear canal. Ear wax acts as a lubricant preventing the skin lining from drying and cracking. The acidity of ear wax provides anti-bacterial and anti-fungal properties.

Ear wax should only be removed if it is causing problems.

Do not put anything in your ears smaller than your elbow!

As your ears are self-cleaning, cotton buds **should never** be used as they force the wax back into the ear canal and can cause infection.

What is microsuction?

Microsuction is the removal of wax, infection, debris and foreign bodies within your ears. The practitioner looks

at your ear through a microscope, and will then use a small suction tube and fine suction end to remove the wax. This can be noisy due to the suction machine however, it should not be painful. If it is uncomfortable, let the practitioner know and they will stop the procedure. You will be asked to keep still as possible unless asked to move. This is important as movement can cause accidental injury to the ear canal or eardrum if unexpected.

Manual clearance is the removal of wax, infection, debris or foreign bodies by using probes, hooks and forceps. Again it is important to keep still throughout the procedure preventing accidental injury to the ear canal or eardrum.

What are the risks and complications?

Every procedure carries a potential risk of infection.

- Grazing can occur if the ear canal skin is sensitive. There is a small risk of perforation if any sudden movements are made. To avoid this you should keep as still as possible throughout the procedure.
- Some people experience dizziness due to the cool air being sucked through the ear canal. This usually goes away quickly. Inform the practitioner and they will stop the procedure until the dizziness has passed.



- Coughing can occur as the nerve that supplies the throat with the coughing mechanism lies close to the ear canal. Inform the practitioner and they will stop the procedure until it passes.
- If microsuction is being performed due to infection the procedure may sometimes be uncomfortable. The practitioner will check you are coping with the procedure throughout.

If you have any concerns or worries, please speak to the practitioner who will be happy to allay your fears.

What should I expect?

- 1 You will be invited into the microsuction room and asked some short questions about your general health.
- 2 You will be asked to lie flat on the couch (if you are in a wheelchair the procedure can still be performed in the chair).
- 3 The procedure time will depend on your particular problem but can be stopped at any time at your request.

You should be able to resume to normal activities after the procedure. If you feel dizzy afterwards we will ask you to sit in the department until it passes, usually within a few minutes.

Please read this leaflet. Share the information with your partner, friend or family member (if you wish) so they can support you.

Please ask if you need this leaflet in an alternative format.

Issued by:
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Attending a Microsuction Clinic

Please apply olive oil from your local chemist: three drops twice a day for one week prior your appointment. This will aid wax removal and avoid unnecessary discomfort.

Do not apply these drops if you suspect or are known to have a perforation or an infection.

What happens afterwards?

- You may find your ears feel strange for a day or two.
- Occasionally there may be a small amount of bleeding.
- You may experience short-term dizziness.
- A follow-up appointment may be required depending on the circumstances.
- If you have any problems after microsuction, please contact your GP.

How to care for your ears

- If you suffer from itchy ears or have an ear infection avoid getting water, soap or shampoo into your ear canal when having a bath or shower. Place a piece of cotton wool about the size of a 50p, coated in soft paraffin at the entrance of the ear.
- You can ask audiology to fit swim moulds to keep your ears dry when swimming or showering if you suffer from a perforation or recurrent infection. A small charge will be made for these per ear.
- If you wear hearing aids, wash the mould daily in warm soapy water and let the mould dry fully before re-inserting.
- **Do not use over the counter products if there is any chance that your eardrum may be perforated (hole within the eardrum).**