

PATIENT INFORMATION

ADMINISTERING OLIVE OIL DROPS

Wax is produced in the ear canal and helps protect our ears from infection. It is gently pushed out of our ears by the action of migrating skin in our ears. The skin grows from the eardrum, along the ear canal, and eventually falls out of our ears mixed with wax. Ears are therefore self cleaning and we should not be tempted to try and remove wax with cotton buds, as this can push the wax deep into the ear, damage the skin of the ear canal, and cause infections.

Some people have narrow ear canals, or wax that becomes dry, which prevents skin and wax falling out of their ears. To help with this natural process, and enable the ear to clean itself, we advise the use of olive oil drops to soften the wax.

We suggest (chemist) shop bought olive oil, as it does not contain any chemicals which could irritate the ear.

To administer the olive oil you will find it easier to purchase an empty eardrop dispenser from the chemist, and pour the oil into that.

You may prefer to treat one or both ears each night, until the next ear examination is due, or until some relief from the wax pressure is noticed, possibly accompanied by an improvement in hearing levels.

To maintain healthy ears once the wax has cleared, olive oil drops, used once a week, can help lubricate the ear canal and keep the wax soft.

HOW TO ADMINISTER THE OLIVE OIL DROPS

1. Warm the bottle of oil to skin temperature and check this on the surface of your wrist
2. Lie down on your side with the ear requiring drops facing upwards
3. Pull the pinna (outer ear) backwards and upwards (just backwards in children)
4. Fill the ear with lots of olive oil drops and then massage the tragus (the skin just in front of the entrance to the ear canal) – this enables the oil to run down the ear canal more easily
5. Stay lying down for 5 - 10 minutes and then get up and wipe away any excess oil with a tissue
6. DO NOT put cotton wool in the ear following the drops as this absorbs the oil and may prevent the softened wax from flowing out of the ear with the oil.
7. Repeat the procedure with the opposite ear if required.