



UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

University Health Center

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Ear Wax

Ear wax is normal. Wax helps protect the ear canal from irritating substances. It is usually soft and light brown. The amount of ear wax that people have varies from person to person. Some people may have sufficient build-up of wax to cause decreased hearing. Excess ear wax has nothing to do with personal hygiene.

If you have excess wax build-up, do **not** use Q-Tips, bobby pins, finger nails, etc. to get it out. This will only aggravate the problem and may cause injury to the ear.

A number of products to remove ear wax are sold over-the-counter. The home care program we strongly recommend is the Murine Wax Removal System. Our pharmacy carries the Murine System for under \$7.00.

The Murine Wax Removal System is simple to use. The directions, which are also included in the box, are as follows:

Tilt head sideways and place 5-10 drops in the affected ear. The tip of the applicator should not enter the ear canal. Keep drops in the ear for several minutes by keeping the head tilted or by placing cotton in the ear. Use the drops twice daily for up to 4 days, if needed, or as directed by a doctor. Any wax remaining after this treatment may be removed by gently flushing the ear with warm water and hydrogen peroxide, using a bulb ear syringe. When the ear canal is irrigated, the tip of the ear syringe should not obstruct the flow of water leaving the ear canal.

If this does not succeed and you are still having a problem, visit your provider to have your ear washed out or the wax taken out manually. If you have a history of a ruptured ear drum, ear drum surgery, tubes in your ears or drainage from your ears, you should not try to remove the ear wax yourself. You may be referred to an ear, nose, and throat specialist to have the wax removed.

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