



EAR WAX

Ear wax, also known as cerumen, is a natural substance produced by glands in the ear canal. It plays a crucial role in maintaining ear health by trapping dust and preventing the entry of foreign particles. However, excessive ear wax buildup can lead to discomfort and impaired hearing. This information sheet aims to provide a basic understanding of ear wax and guidelines for safe ear cleaning.

What is Ear Wax and what does it do?

Ear wax is a mixture of secretions from sebaceous glands and sweat glands in the ear canal, along with dead skin cells. It is a sticky substance that usually moves naturally toward the ear opening, where it dries up and falls out.

Protective Barrier: Ear wax helps prevent the entry of dust, bacteria, and other foreign particles into the ear canal.

Moisturizing: It prevents the ear canal from becoming too dry, reducing the risk of itching and irritation.

Self-Cleaning: Jaw movements during activities like chewing and talking help move ear wax toward the ear opening, facilitating self-cleaning.

Common Issues

Excessive production or inadequate self-cleaning can lead to the buildup of ear wax, causing symptoms such as earache, hearing loss, dizziness, or ringing in the ears (tinnitus).

In some cases, ear wax becomes impacted and creates a blockage. This may require intervention for removal.

Safe Ear Cleaning Tips

Do Not Use Cotton Swabs: Avoid inserting cotton swabs or other objects into the ear canal, as this can push wax further in, leading to blockages or injury.

Ear Drops: Over-the-counter ear drops such as waxsol can soften ear wax, making it easier to exit the ear naturally.

Seek Professional Help: If you experience persistent symptoms or suspect an ear wax blockage, consult a healthcare provider or an ear, nose, and throat specialist for safe removal under microscopic guidance in the clinic.

When to Consult a Professional

- **Pain:** If you experience ear pain.
- **Hearing Loss:** If hearing loss persists despite attempts at home care.
- **Vertigo or Dizziness:** If you experience persistent dizziness or vertigo.

Conclusion

Understanding the role of ear wax and adopting safe ear cleaning practices can contribute to maintaining optimal ear health. If you have concerns or experience persistent symptoms, do consult with a healthcare professional for personalized advice and care.