

Tower House Medical Centre

Stockway South, Nailsea
Bristol, BS48 2XX
Tel: 01275 866700

Brockway Medical Centre

8 Brockway, Nailsea
Bristol, BS48 1BZ
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TYNTESFIELD
MEDICAL GROUP

www.tyntesfield.nhs.uk

Backwell Medical Centre

15 West Town Road, Backwell
Bristol, BS48 3HA
Tel: 01275 465100

Long Ashton Surgery

55-57 Rayens Cross Road,
Long Ashton, Bristol, BS41 9DY
Tel: 01275 392134

Blocked ears (earwax): Self Care

Ear syringing is no longer available at Tyntesfield Medical Group.

Earwax is a normal build-up of dead cells, hair, foreign material such as dust, and natural wax which forms a protective coating on the skin in the ear canal. The quantity of earwax produced varies greatly from person to person.

You only need to remove earwax if it is causing symptoms such as difficulty with hearing or prior to fitting a hearing aid. If earwax is not causing any symptoms, it should be left alone.

Do NOT try to clean the ear canal with cotton wool buds – this often simply pushes wax deeper into the ear canal, and is one of the commonest causes of blocked ears.

If you are having symptoms due to earwax, there are some things you can do yourself to try to deal with this problem.

Our advice would be to treat one ear at any time.

Ear Drops

Ear drops alone will clear a plug of earwax in most cases. Put 2 or 3 drops of ordinary olive oil down the ear 2 or 3 times a day for 2-3 weeks. This softens the wax so that it then runs out of its own accord without harming the ear. You can continue for any length of time, but 3 weeks is usually enough. Surprisingly, you will not necessarily see wax come out. It often seems to come out unnoticed.

If you are prone to repeated wax built up you can continue to use olive oil drops twice a week to prevent recurrence. If olive oil does not work you can buy sodium bicarbonate drops from pharmacies.

How to use ear drops:

1. Warm the drops to room temperature before using them
2. Pour a few drops into the affected ear
3. Lie with the affected ear uppermost when putting in drops
4. Stay like this for 10 minutes to allow the drops to soak into the earwax.

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Bulb Syringing

Bulb syringing is a safe, alternate way to remove ear wax. Bulb syringes can be easily purchased from a pharmacy and allow you to clear your ears from wax in your own home. Alternatively they can easily be purchased online – for example on Amazon, costing under £4: <https://www.amazon.co.uk/Acu-Life-400003-AcuLife-Bulb-Syringe/dp/B01LEKQJHW>

If your ears are painful or have fluid coming out of them, or if you have been told previously that you have a hole in your ear drum (perforation) or have recently had surgery on your ear, you should see a doctor or nurse and don't use this method.

Instructions for Bulb Syringing:

Use olive oil drops twice a day for at least 14 days prior to bulb syringing. Or alternatively use sodium bicarbonate ear drops purchased from your pharmacy (please read the manufacturers leaflet.)

1. Wash your hands.
2. Use a bowl of cooled, boiled water that is warm to the touch, not too hot or too cold
3. Prepare the syringe by squirting water in and out of it a few times.
4. Gently pull your outer ear "up and out" to help straighten out the canal, which will allow better access for the water
5. Tilt your head so the ear to be treated is upmost.
6. Place the tip of the syringe into the opening of the ear. Do NOT push the syringe further into the ear and gently squirt one or more bulb syringes of water into your ear. (This might be best done in the shower so that the excess water will run into the bathtub and not on your floor)
7. Allow the water to remain in your ear for at least 60 seconds. Gently tilt your head in the opposite direction and wiggle your outer ear

If, after 3 weeks or more, you are still having symptoms, you might want to consider:

Microsuction

Microsuction is an alternative method of removing a stubborn build up of wax and is available privately. Tyntesfield Medical Group does not offer this service.