

Wax removal in the Targeted Wax Removal Clinic

You have been referred for wax removal as part of your Adult Assessment Pathway through the Audiology Department. These referrals are made in cases where the wax may be contributing to the symptoms for which you have attended; and it is preventing your planned assessment or tests, or it is interfering with your planned management.

Prior to your appointment

The removal of wax in the Targeted Wax Removal Clinic will be conducted using a type of procedure called microsuction. The clinician will use magnification (such as a microscope) and a thin tube connected to a vacuum pump to remove the wax, as well as other instruments where needed. You can help with this procedure by using drops for at least five days, leading up to your appointment. Don't worry if you have not had the opportunity to do this as it may still be possible to remove the wax

Olive oil

Olive oil will help to soften the wax and is useful for longer term use for people with recurrent wax issues. You can use olive oil from home or purchase a spray from the pharmacy. You can use a few drops once or twice a day. Olive oil does not dissolve the wax but softens it.

Sodium bicarbonate drops

Sodium bicarbonate drops actively dissolves the wax so are a quicker, more effective method for wax removal. These drops should only be used for 7-10 days at a time. If you have had an ear drum perforation or previous ear surgery, then check with your audiology team before using these drops, as they can cause discomfort. You will then need a break before using them again, if required.

Other drops are available 'over the counter' but you must discuss your ear and health history with the pharmacist before you use them.

Risks of wax removal by microsuction

As with any procedure there can be some small risks. There is a low risk for less significant effects, such as a small scratch from the equipment or a little discomfort, (these are uncommon but do happen, though they rarely require any further action).

There is also a small risk of a complication affecting the ear or the function of the ear. If this happens it may require further intervention, but the likelihood of this happening is very, very rare.

Those not suitable for wax removal in the Audiology Clinic

If you are taking blood thinning medications; you have active or recent ear infections; you have had previous surgeries or injuries to the ear; or you experienced previous complications from wax removal procedures, it may not be possible to carry out the procedure in this clinic, and alternative arrangements will have to be considered.

If you have had perforation or tinnitus, where it is made worse with loud noise, some caution may be exercised, but the procedure may not be ruled out in all cases. You should raise any issues or concerns you have with the clinician at your appointment and they will be able to discuss these with you.

If you do not wish to go ahead with removal of the wax in this clinic, we will be able to discuss your options at that stage.

At the end of your appointment:

We will only arrange for removal of wax in the Targeted Wax Removal Clinic so you can continue with any necessary tests or management for your condition. When the wax is successfully removed, you will be able to return to your Audiology pathway. **We will not, for this reason, offer any routine or regular follow-up, once the wax has been removed.**

If you have any questions about wax removal do feel free to contact the Clinical Admin Team on tel: 0118 322 7238 and they will contact a member of the wax removal team for you.

If you would like this leaflet in other languages or formats (e.g. large print, Braille or audio), please contact the Audiology Department.

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