



AURES EAR HEALTH

GUIDANCE AND INFORMATION

What is ear wax and why does it build up?

Ear wax is produced by your ear as part of a natural process. Normally it is eliminated spontaneously, helped by the natural movements of your jaw such as chewing and talking. It contains old skin cells, dust, hair and foreign objects collected from your ear canal as it makes its way out. This is then mixed with wax secretions near the entrance to your ear.

It takes on average 12 months for an old skin cell to move from the bottom of your ear canal to the entrance of your ear to be expelled. If you use cotton buds in your ear then you just push the wax back down to the bottom of the ear canal and it has to start its 12month journey once again.

The purpose of ear wax is to protect, clean, lubricate and prevent some infections in our ear canal.

Sometimes a large build-up of wax can happen. This can be because of:

- age – older people may have drier wax and skin.
- dusty or dirty environments – people who work in areas where there is a lot of dust or dirt in the air causing wax to build up quicker.
- **ear habits – using cotton buds, hair clips etc. to try to clean the ear canal is one of the most common causes of impacted wax. It causes the wax to be forced back down the ear canal.**

- hearing aid moulds – hearing aid moulds can interfere with the ears normal process of shedding dead skin and wax causing debris to build up in the ear canal.
- earplugs – the use of earplugs, often required in some occupations can have a similar effect to cotton buds.
- skin conditions – dry skin conditions such as eczema and psoriasis causing flaking of the skin and a build-up of excess dead skin in the ear canal.

What are the symptoms of excess wax?

- Reduced, or loss of, hearing
- Tinnitus (buzzing or ringing in your ears)
- Pain or discomfort
- A feeling of fullness in your ear
- Itching
- Dizziness
- Coughing

How can you remove excess wax?

There are a few ways that trained ear health professionals can remove excess wax, debris, discharge and foreign bodies from your ear. They are:-

- Instruments
- Irrigation- warm water to flush out
- Microsuction- suction/hover out

If you think you may have excess ear wax build up then get in touch with Aures Ear Health to book an assessment appointment.