

# Marazion Surgery



## Patient Information – Ear Irrigation

If you have been given an appointment for ear syringing you must read this leaflet before the appointment, sign the attached consent form and bring with you to the appointment.

Ear Wax is a normal body secretion, providing protection against infection and dust particles. The ear is self-cleaning, and wax works its way out naturally. **Wax is a natural secretion and if it is not a problem it is best left alone**

Never use cotton wool buds to clean inside your ears, they irritate the delicate skin inside the ear canal, also pushes wax back into the ear compacting it against the ear drum.

Visit a clinician who will advise whether wax removal is necessary and what type of procedure is most appropriate for you depending on your medical history

### Ear irrigation is not risk free

It will only be carried out if the ear is completely blocked with wax, and this is soft. If any part of the ear drum is visible ear irrigation will not be performed.

Only **one** ear will be treated at a time.

Irrigation is **not** recommended within **2 weeks of flying**.

Ear irrigation is not routinely performed.

### Ear irrigation can cause damage to the ear:

From infection, acute and chronic tinnitus (ringing in the ears), to possible perforation of the ear drum and deafness.

### Ear irrigation is not suitable for everyone

It should **not** be used if you have:

- Previously had problems with irrigation, such as pain in your ear or severe vertigo.
- A perforated eardrum in the last year.
- A discharge of mucus from your ear, which may indicate an undiagnosed perforation in the last year.
- History of a middle ear infection in the last 6 weeks.
- Had ear surgery of ANY kind, including A grommet (a small, hollow tube surgically inserted into your ear if you have a build-up of fluid that causes hearing difficulties) in the last 18 months.
- Cleft palate (whether repaired or not).
- A severe external ear infection (acute otitis externa) with pain in the ear canal or pinna (the visible part of your ear) or (otitis media) in the past few weeks.

You should not have ear irrigation if the ear to be treated is your only hearing ear. This is because there is a small chance it could cause permanent hearing loss.

**If you ever had surgery to your ears or had a perforated ear drum, you must tell us before the procedure.**

To minimise risk of injury, the wax must be softened with ear drops for at **least two weeks**. Olive oil drops are well tolerated in most people. The drops should be used 2 to 3 times a day.

To put in drops, lie on one side with the affected ear uppermost.

Drop as much as possible or room temperature olive oil into the ear and leave in place for a few minutes.

You should remain lying on your side for 20 minutes.

### **Ear irrigation**

An electronic ear irrigator is used; it involves a pressurised flow of warm water that removes the build-up of earwax. The irrigator has variable pressure control so that irrigation can be performed at the minimum pressure. A controlled flow of warm water will be squirted into your ear canal to flush out the earwax. Ear irrigation **should** be a painless procedure.

Tell the person who is treating you immediately if you have any:

- Pain
- Dizziness
- Hearing loss

Symptoms such as these may be a result of an ear infection and will need further investigation.

If ear irrigation is unsuccessful at removing earwax from your ear, we may recommend:

- Using eardrops again and returning for further irrigation.
- That you be referred to an ear, nose and throat (ENT) specialist to remove the earwax.

### **Other treatments**

If your earwax cannot be removed using eardrops and ear irrigation, or you are unsuitable for these treatments, alternative options may be considered.

### **Agreement to Treatment**

#### **Statement of patient**

I agree to have my ears irrigated & have read 'Patient information for Ear Irrigation' & understand the contraindications & accept the risks.

I confirm I do not have any of the conditions listed in the leaflet that would prevent me safely having ear irrigation.

I understand the person performing the procedure will have appropriate training & experience, and can refuse to irrigate my ear if not appropriate treatment.

Signature..... Date .....

Name (Print).....

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## 7. Ear Irrigation Advice leaflet

The aim of this leaflet is to reduce requests for unnecessary ear irrigations. Ear irrigation is not without risk so any procedure that reduces the number of instances is obviously beneficial.

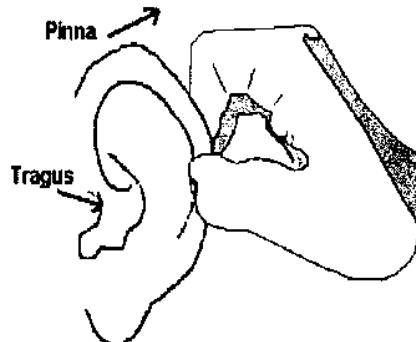
### What to do BEFORE asking for an appointment

An appointment to see a nurse for "ear syringing" cannot be undertaken without initial pre-treatment.

The pre-treatment requires the application of olive oil into the ear(s) daily for two weeks. Please follow the instructions here to encourage normal expulsion of wax from the outer ear.

### Installation of ear drops

- You are recommended to buy a 'dropper' bottle of olive oil from your pharmacist.
- Applying drops 2 or 3 times daily for 2 weeks prior to a consultation for wax removal is an essential part of the treatment – and for many patients this action will resolve the problem without the need for irrigation.
- If you are troubled with repeated accumulation of ear wax your nurse or doctor may recommend using olive oil once every week as a preventative treatment.
- Lie down on your side with the affected ear uppermost
- Use the olive oil in very small amounts – and stop using if you experience any pain or discomfort
- Pull the pinna (outer ear) backwards and upwards (see diagram). Drop 1-2 drops of olive oil, at room temperature, into the ear canal and massage the tragus just in front of the ear
- Remain lying down for 5 minutes and then wipe away any excess oil
- Repeat the procedure with the opposite ear if necessary



### Ear wax treatment

- A small amount of wax is normal in the ear canal. It is only when there is an accumulation of wax that removal may be necessary. Correctly applying olive oil to the ear can facilitate expulsion of the wax and, in the vast majority of cases, this treatment can avoid the need for unnecessary ear syringing.
- Using olive oil drops as directed does not harm the ear and you can continue application for any length of time – although 2 weeks is often enough.
- Be aware that you may not see the wax coming out – it often comes out unnoticed - but you are likely to find your discomfort and/or hearing loss disappears.
- If, however, after 2 weeks you are still deaf from wax, make an appointment with the practice nurse to consider irrigation of the ear.
- If you are deaf and you don't know why then you should ask for a Doctor's appointment. If the Doctor finds that wax is causing the deafness, we will not undertake irrigation of the ear until you have commenced the olive oil treatment as described.
- If the nurse detects an infection or problem you may be referred to one of the doctors.
- If we do need to undertake ear irrigation, we will ensure the risks are explained to you.
- Irrigation of the ear can, amongst other things, lead to a higher risk of ear infections, damage to the tympanic membrane, perforated eardrum, tinnitus (persistent noise).