

Ear Microsuction Patient Information

(Such as for Wax Removal)

What is Ear Wax

Earwax also known as cerumen, can become built up (impacted) within the ear causing:

- Reduced hearing / hearing loss
- Pain
- Itching sensation
- Fullness of the ear.
- Tinnitus - ringing, swishing or unusual noises heard in the ear

What is Microsuction?

Microsuction is a procedure used to unblock your ears of debris, foreign bodies and cerumen. The clinician uses a magnification tool and a light to look directly into your ears and view the ear canal. They use a small vacuum tip to gently vacuum/remove any softened wax or foreign material from the ear canal. Other fine instruments may be used during the procedure, such as to push wax away from the canal walls for suctioning.

Ear microsuction is a dry procedure. The clinician will also assess your outer ear/skin.

It is recommended that prior to ear micro suction wax-softening ear drops are used to break up wax. In some instances, use of ear drops clears the build up without the need for ear micro suction.

Drops should be put into the ears twice per day for at least 7 days before micro suction (see instructions).

Some wax softening drops can be used for up to 10 days (refer to manufacturer's directions / instructions).

Many products are available over the pharmacy counter that soften earwax for example Ear Clear or Waxsol are commercial ear wax softener.



What are the potential risks involved in having microsuction?

Any medical procedure carries risk. You must tell the clinician if you are taking blood thinners or steroids. Many of the risks below can be minimised by remaining as still as possible during the procedure. If you do need to move for any reason, inform your clinician, so they can safely pause the procedure and re-assess. For those sensitive to loud noises, microsuction may not be suitable.

Potential Risks

Incomplete Clearance

Occasionally we may only be able to remove 90-95% of the original blockage. Usually when some wax is in a position that can't be safely reached or dislodged. It may be trapped and cannot be safely removed. In these cases, we may recommend wax softening drops for a few more days for the wax to loosen and shift by itself.

Dizziness

You may experience dizziness. As microsuction moves cooler air through the ear canal, but this usually goes away quickly. We advise you to keep your eyes open during the procedure but, if you do feel dizzy, let your clinician know and they can take the suction tip out of your ear for you to feel better.

Cough

Microsuction may make you feel the need to cough or have a tickle in your throat. This is quite harmless and will pass when the procedure is over.

Trauma (grazing the ear canal or structures)

Grazes or scratches in the ear canal happen rarely. They can be avoided by staying as still as possible during the procedure. Additionally, if there is any swelling or signs of infection, you may experience occasional bleeding. This is generally harmless, but your clinician will inform you if it occurs.

Eardrum Perforation

There is a slight but rare risk of damage to the eardrum. If this does occur, your clinician will inform you and we will provide appropriate care and support to you.

If you want to stop the procedure at any point, just let your clinician know and they will stop immediately.

Cost for Microsuction procedure

Fee payable: \$130 or Pensioner \$65

Our price is the same for the procedure, whether both or one ear is cleaned and/or procedure does not proceed or is ceased for patient comfort +/- safety reasons not limited to patients inability to sit still, or is incomplete eg due to dryness of ear wax.

A second fee payable will be charged if a repeat booking is required due to inadequate patient preparation and insufficient use of softening drops, or if a repeat/additional procedure becomes clinically indicated.

Will I pay full price if no wax is found?

Unfortunately, there will likely be a fee for this.

To prevent this, a medical assessment is advised before booking microsuction, to confirm that it's the appropriate treatment for your problem/concern. It may be that other care may be advised.

What happens if I need to reschedule or cancel my appointment?

To avoid a cancellation fee please provide at least 24 hours' notice. If no notice is given and you do not attend your appointment, APC holds the right to charge you in full for the service you missed.

Before the procedure begins

The clinician will go over the procedure with you including risks and benefits and offer any alternative. You will be asked about your ear history such as ear surgery and current ear problems including itching, hearing loss, ringing sounds or feeling of 'fullness'.

You are encouraged to ask any questions you may have about ear microsuctioning before signing the procedure consent form.

After the procedure

There are very few side effects from ear micro suction, however, Please return for further assessment, advice and possible treatment if you:

- experience discharge (blood or pus) from the ear canal or swelling around the ear.
- Have ongoing or increasing discomfort or pain.
- Experience ongoing dizziness/ unsteadiness, nausea or vomiting (vertigo).

- Feel that any pre-existing tinnitus is more distressing. Some people with troublesome tinnitus may notice that when wax is removed and their hearing improves the tinnitus may increase in severity.
- Received specific instructions to return from the clinician.

Routine ear cleaning and minimise wax build up

Clean the external part of the ear, including behind and around it using a wet warm face cloth.

Do NOT put or push foreign objects into your ear (NO cotton buds, pencils, matches or hair clips).

Do not put anything in your ears when attempting to clean them. These will push wax down the ear canal causing further impaction. Such items can cause trauma or damage to the ear canal and or eardrum.

Other factors effecting ear wax build up

- Earplugs: the use of earplugs, whether as an occupational requirement or not, can have a similar effect to cotton buds, potentially pushing wax down into the ear canal.
- Hearing Aids may interfere with the body's ability to shed wax and dead skin which causes debris (such as wax) to build up in the ear canal.
- Aging: Older people may have drier wax and may experience increased hair growth in the ears, reducing the ear's usual 'self-cleaning' movement of wax out of the ear canal.

How to self-administer ear drops

1. Wash and dry your hands.
2. Have the ear drops and a few facial tissues at hand.
3. Tilt your head or lie down on your side with the affected ear facing the ceiling.
4. Gently pull on the Helix area of the affected ear, upwards and towards the back of the head.
5. Instill the number of drops (as per manufacturers or doctor's instructions).
6. Massage the tragus as this will assist the drops in moving down the ear canal. (see image below)
7. Stay on your side for 5 minutes to allow the drops to reach the wax plug.
8. After 5 minutes, sit up and using a facial tissue wipe away any excess liquid from the outer-ear.
9. Repeat the procedure with the other ear if required.
10. Do this morning and night for at least 7 days before your appointment for ear microsuction.

The Ear

