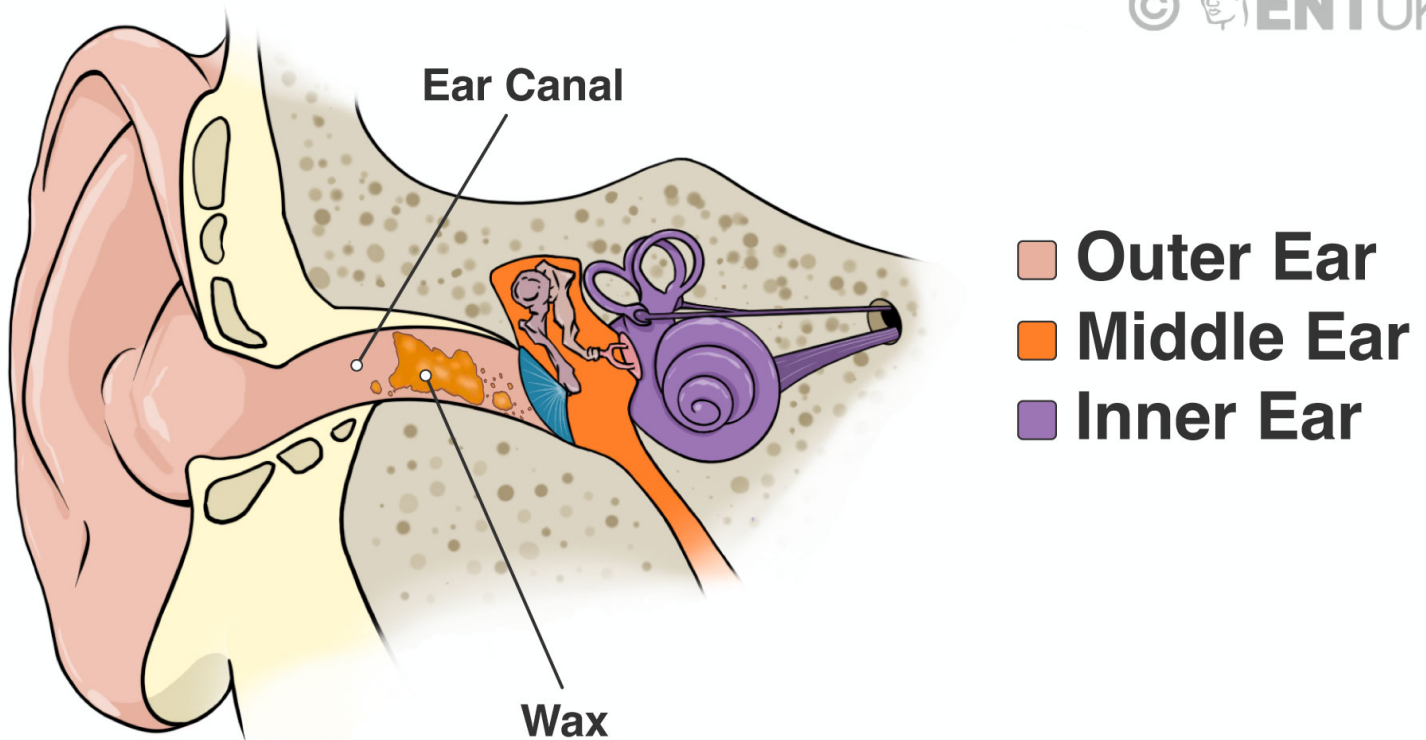




Ear microsuction

The ear makes wax to keep the ear canal healthy and protect it from germs and dirt. Usually, the wax comes out of the ear on its own. You don't need to use cotton buds or clean your ears.

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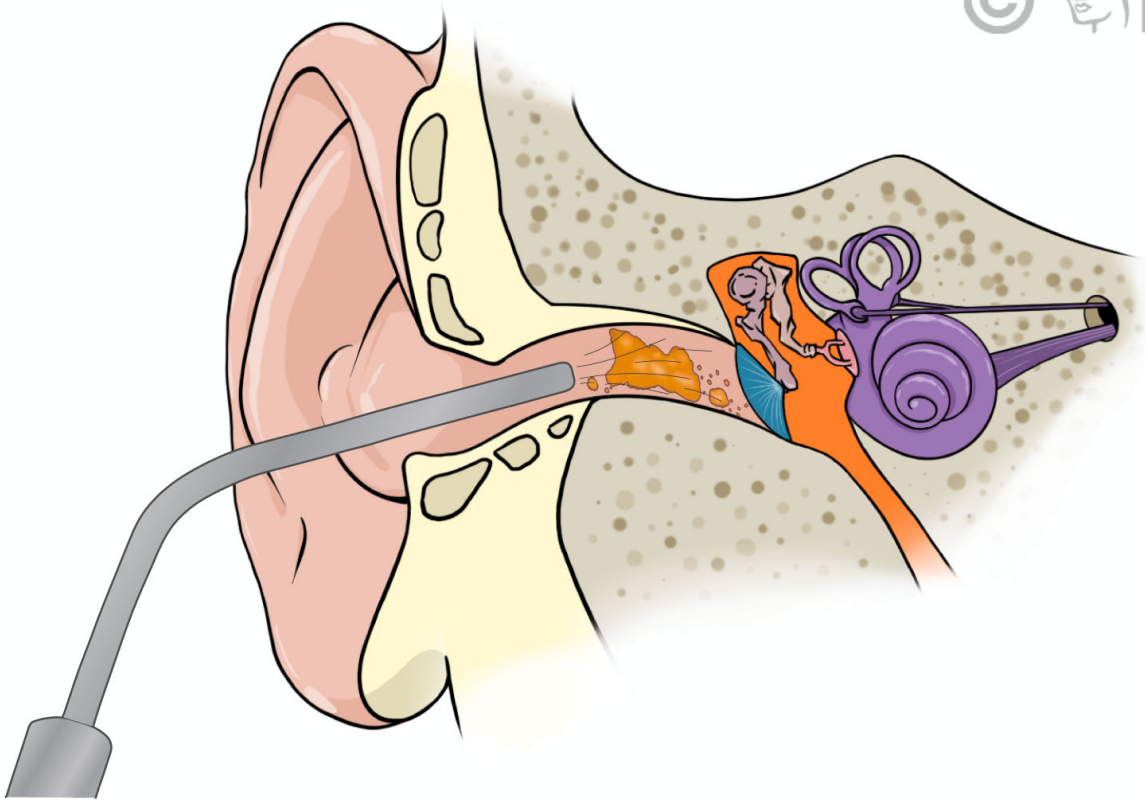


Wax build-up in the Ear Canal

In some people, their ears don't clean themselves. This results in wax build-up. Using cotton buds can also cause wax to become stuck in the ear. [Click here](#) for self-help tips for wax build-up.

Why have I been offered ear microsuction?

Sometimes, olive oil drops or sodium bicarbonate drops don't help. Your ears sometimes need to be cleaned. If you are visiting a doctor for ear, nose, and throat issues and your ears have some wax blocking them, the doctor might need to clean your ears to see them better. The doctor uses a thin tube to suck wax out of the ear canal. This procedure is called ear microsuction.



Microsuction used to remove wax from the ear canal

Where will I get my ears microsuctioned?

You will usually have this done in a hospital clinic room, GP practice, hearing aid clinic or a dewaxing clinic. Microsuction is often done by a doctor, specialist nurse or audiologist.

You will lie down on a bed or sit in a chair. The doctor will use a special tool like a microscope or a camera to look in your ear. It might take a short time or up to 20 minutes, depending on how blocked your ear is and what it's blocked with. The doctor may use other instruments to help with wax removal. If you have hard, dry wax or have had problems with microsuction before, you can use wax softening drops for 5 days before your appointment to make removing the wax easier. (See ENT UK leaflet on [How to use ear drops or sprays](#) and [Self-help tips for itchy ears and earwax build-up](#).)

What can I expect with this procedure?

Microsuction is usually well tolerated but there are some common symptoms you might experience:

- It can be loud: sometimes, you might hear a high-pitched screeching sound if something is blocking the suction tube. If you are very sensitive to sound, you can ask your doctor to use other tools to clear your ear instead. This might take longer and be more difficult.
- It can be uncomfortable in your ear: If the wax or foreign object is deep in your ear, you might feel some discomfort.
- It can be uncomfortable in your neck: you might need to turn and tilt your head to the side during the procedure, so let your doctor know if you have neck or back pain.
- It can make you feel dizzy: some people might feel dizzy during the procedure, especially if they've had previous mastoid surgery or feel anxious.
- It can cause coughing: sometimes, touching the skin inside the ear can make you cough.

- It very rarely causes fainting: if you tend to faint, let your doctor know, and you should lie down during the procedure.

You may need to have your ears cleaned more than once: The doctor might not be able to remove the wax or object because it is too painful. The doctor might ask you to use wax softeners and schedule another appointment.

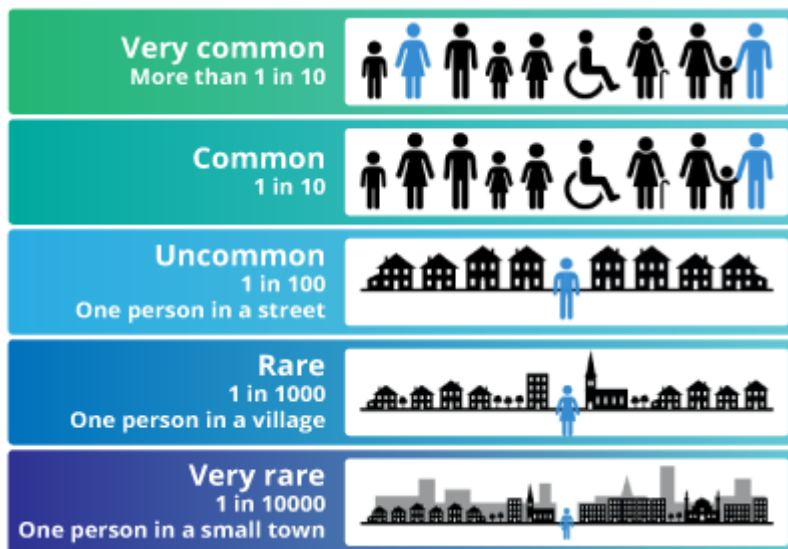
You do not have to take painkillers afterwards. But if you had pain during the procedure then you can take short-term painkillers like paracetamol.

You do not have to avoid getting your ear wet after the procedure. Your doctor will let you know if there is anything you must do following the procedure.

ABOUT THE RISKS

Are there any complications to ear microsuction?

Although it is a very safe procedure, a few complications can occur.



Trauma to the ear canal - 5 in 100 cases

This is **uncommon** but can lead to pain and bleeding from the ear canal. Once the micro suction has stopped, both usually settle after a few seconds or minutes.

Damage to the ear drum - less than 1 in 10,000 cases

This is **very rare**. It can cause more severe pain and might cause bleeding, hearing loss, vertigo (spinning sensation) or tinnitus (ringing noise in the ears). The hole in the ear drum usually heals after a few weeks but can be permanent.

Ear canal infection following trauma - 1 in 500 cases

This is **rare**. You can get an outer ear infection if your ear canal is damaged during microsuction.

Vertigo - 1 in 200 cases

This can sometimes happen if you have had previous mastoid surgery but may also be caused by damage to the ear drum.

Tinnitus (ringing in the ears) - temporary (1 in 100) or permanent (1 in 5000 cases)

This is unusual. If you are sensitive to noise, you may have tinnitus after having your ear microsuctioned. This is usually temporary but in very rare cases it can be permanent.

Conductive hearing loss - temporary (1 in 1000) or permanent (<1 in 10,000 cases)

This is rare. It can be caused by objects in the ear canal that are difficult to remove, from blood that has built up because of damage to the ear canal or from damage to the ear drum. In extreme cases, it can be caused by damage to the small chain of bones behind the ear drum, known as ossicles. Most conductive hearing losses are temporary.

Permanent sensorineural (or nerve-related) hearing loss - less than 1 in 10,000 cases

This is extremely rare to develop because of microsuction. It can also occur from severe injury to the ear drum and the small bones behind the eardrum.

What should I do if I have problems after microsuction?

If you have any problems after the ear wax removal procedure, please contact the clinic where the procedure was performed for help during their working hours.

Disclaimer: *This publication is designed for the information of patients. Whilst every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, the information contained may not be comprehensive and patients should not act upon it without seeking professional advice.*



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FEEDBACK SURVEY



