



How to use ear drops or sprays

How to apply ear drops or ear spray: a step-by-step guide

1. Wash your hands.
2. Hold the bottle in your hand for a few minutes to bring the drops closer to body temperature. Do not place the bottle in hot water.
3. Twist the cap anti-clockwise to remove it. For some bottles, you may need to remove the security band and the cap used to pierce the nozzle.
4. Lie on your side with your affected ear facing upwards when applying **ear drops**. For **ear sprays**, sit upright.
5. Gently pull the outer ear backwards and upwards to open the ear canal.
6. Squeeze three drops into the affected ear or spray it once (see Figure 1a).
7. Press three times on the tragus of your ear (the small, firm flap in front of the ear opening). This will spread the medication into the ear canal (Figure 1b).

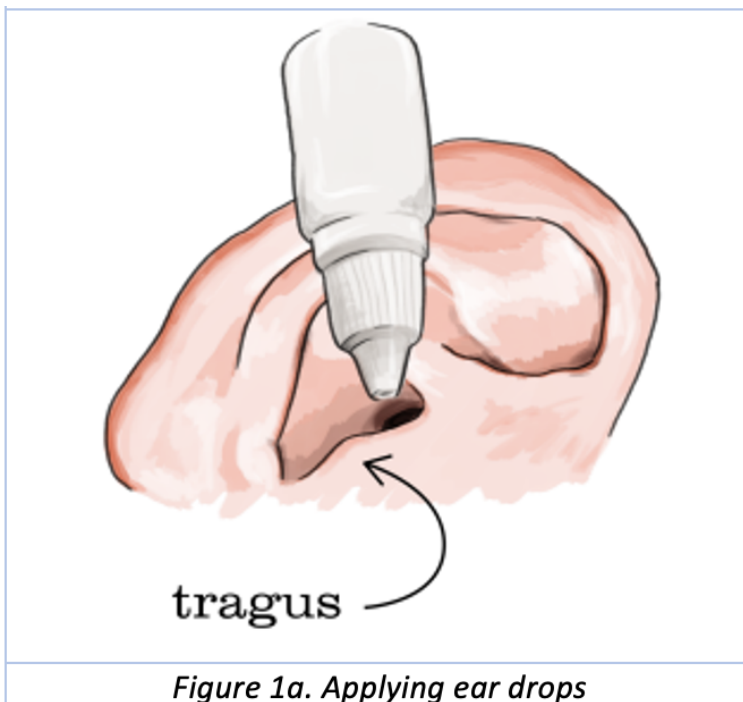


Figure 1a. Applying ear drops

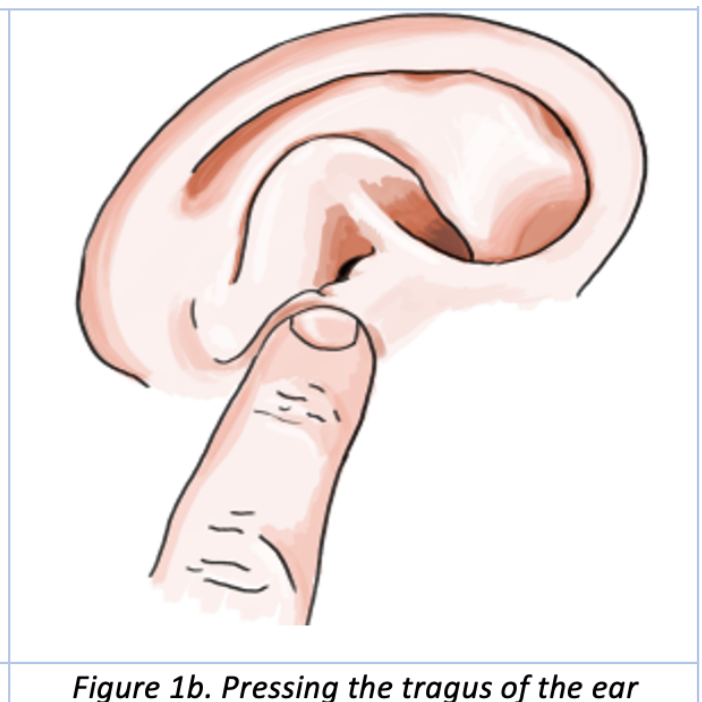


Figure 1b. Pressing the tragus of the ear

Illustrations by Thomas Newman (thomasnewman.design)

8. Remain on your side for three minutes to allow the medication to soak in.
9. Don't worry if some of the medication runs out of your ear – just wipe it with a tissue. Do NOT plug the ear canal with cotton wool.
10. If needed, repeat the process for the other ear.
11. Clean the nozzle and replace the cap firmly after use.

If possible, ask someone to administer the drops or spray for you, following the steps above.

Storing ear drops or ear spray

- Keep ear drops or ear spray upright in a cool, dark place, out of the sight and reach of children.
- Only use ear drops prescribed or recommended for you. Do not share your ear drops or ear spray with anyone else.
- Only use the ear drops or spray for the length of time prescribed.
- Once opened, throw the bottle away after the time recommended on the instructions (maximum of four weeks). You can write the date you opened the bottle on the label or box to help you remember when to throw it away. Do not use after the expiry date.

Things to tell your doctor or nurse:

- Whether you have a hole (a perforation) in your ear drum. Some drops are still safe to use, but you should make sure your prescriber is aware.
- If you are pregnant.
- If you feel pain, irritation or dizziness when using your drops, contact your doctor or nurse.

Looking after your ears

DO NOT use cotton buds or anything else to try and clean your ears. It may seem like you are removing wax but most of the wax or dirt will be pushed further into the ear. Using cotton buds can scratch or damage the ear canal. Ears clean themselves and small bits of wax will fall out occasionally – this is normal.

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.*



ENT UK has recently gained PIF TICK accreditation to become a 'trusted information creator'.

Kindly submit your feedback to help us improve our Patient Information Leaflets.

We greatly value your input and appreciate the time you take to provide it.

[FEEDBACK SURVEY](#)



Date Published: 22/09/2022 **Review Date:** 22/09/2025