

14. Sometimes ears feel blocked from the inside. What is the best way to clear them?

A. Ears can be blocked due to a number of reasons. The external ear canal can be blocked with earwax or a small foreign object. Earwax is normal in the ear canal but sometimes it accumulates and completely blocks the canal. Foreign objects should never be put into the ear canal. These types of blocks can cause hearing difficulty and discomfort, and must be removed. Another type of blockage in the ear can occur in the middle ear, which is most often caused by an ear infection and fluid. In both cases it is important to see a doctor who will diagnose the problem and prescribe the correct treatment.

15. My ears won't stop ringing. I just got over an ear infection. What can I do to stop it?

A. Ringing in your ears, also called Tinnitus, can be distressing. Most often a person with tinnitus also has a hearing loss, but not always. There are a number of causes of tinnitus including: hearing loss, allergies, medications, physical damage to the ear and other medical problems. A person can have ringing during an ear infection. It disappears after the infection. If the ringing doesn't go away within a month, go back to your doctor/audiologist.

DO NOT

- **INSERT ANYTHING INTO THE EARS**
- **USE HOME REMEDIES IN YOUR EARS**
- **LISTEN TO LOUD MUSIC**

**IF YOU HAVE AN EAR PROBLEM,
SEE A DOCTOR OR AUDIOLOGIST**



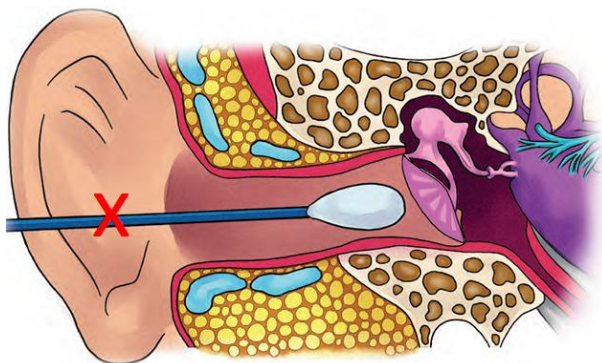
Ear care can avoid hearing loss

Some Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

International Ear Care Day 2014

www.who.int/pbd





FAQs about general ear care

1. How can I keep my ears clean?

A. The ear is a self-cleaning organ and does not require any active cleaning. Cotton buds should not be used for cleaning the ear.

2. I have a habit of cleaning my ear with matchstick. Is it the right thing to do?

A. Do not insert or put anything into the ear. Do not use any oil, sticks, pins etc. because these can lead to infection in the ear.

3. How often should hearing be tested?

A. Anyone regularly exposed to hazardous noise should have an annual hearing test. Also, anyone who notices a change in his/her hearing, or who develops tinnitus, should have his or her ears checked immediately.

5. How long can someone be in a loud noise before it becomes hazardous?

A. The degree of hearing hazard is related to both the level of the noise as well as to the duration of the exposure. It is better to protect against loud noise as soon as one gets exposed to it. Get your ears protected before you enter the loud noise area.

6. How can one tell if a noisy situation is too loud?

A. There are two rules: First, if you have to raise your voice to talk to someone who is an arm's length away, then the noise is likely to be hazardous. Second, if your ears are ringing or sounds seem dull or flat after leaving a noisy place, then you probably were exposed to hazardous noise.

7. Can earplugs reach the eardrum and cause damage to the eardrum?

A. Length of the average ear canal is 24mm. The length of a typical earplug ranges from 12-18 mm. Also the path from the opening of the ear canal to the eardrum is not straight. The irregularity of the canal protects the ear drum from injury.

8. I enjoy listening loud music through ear/headphones. Will it harm my hearing ability?

A. The risk of hearing loss increases as sound is played louder and louder for long durations. It has been shown that listening through ear/headphones at 95% of maximum sound volume for 5 minutes continuously will damage the hearing capacity. Breaks should be taken while listening through ear/headphones.

9. Can our ears get infected by using earplugs?

A. Using earplugs will not cause an infection. Have clean hands when using earplugs that need to be rolled or formed with your fingers.

10. Can certain medicines cause hearing loss?

A. Certain medicines are harmful for ears. They damage the cells situated in the inner ear and lead to nerve hearing loss. Some medicines known to have adverse effects on the ears are gentamycin, streptomycin, frusemide, chloroquine, and aspirin. These medicines must be used only on the advice of a qualified doctor/audiologist.

11. What is the cause of itching in the ears?

A. The common causes are fungal infection, allergy, chronic dermatitis of the canal and eczematous otitis externa. After examination suitable ear drops are prescribed.



12. What is the cause of pain in the ear?

A. The pain in the ear can be caused by problems such as impacted wax in the ear, acute infection in the ear canal, acute infection of the eardrum or because of fluid in the middle ear. It is commonly seen in children. The child should be taken for an ear check-up if the child complains of pain in the ear or hearing loss; you detect discharge from the ear, improper speech development and if the child does not understand properly what you say. Consult your doctor, paediatrician or an ENT specialist urgently.

13. What is the indication of placement of tubes in the eardrums?

A. Many small children need to have tubes placed in their ears because of recurring ear infections. These tubes equalize the pressure between the external and the middle ear and help in the draining out of fluid from the middle ear. Most tubes are automatically extruded after a period of time (6 months to 2 years). If the child still has recurring ear infections, they may have another set of tubes inserted in their eardrums.