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Ear Wax

Never put anything smaller than your elbow in your ear.

The ear canal is shaped like an hourglass. The skin of the outer ear canal has glands that produce ear wax. This wax is protective and serves to trap dust and dirt particles, preventing them from reaching the ear drum. The wax typically accumulates, dries out, and then falls out of the ear canal. The ear canal may be blocked by wax when attempts to clean the ear push wax further into the ear canal.

Ear wax is healthy in normal amounts and protects the ear canal. The absence of ear wax may result in dry, itchy ears.

Wax typically migrates from the ear drum to the ear opening, preventing the need for cleaning.

If there is blockage of the ear canal by wax, most cases do improve with home treatments. However, if there is a concern for a hole in the ear drum (tympanic membrane perforation), a physician should be consulted prior to use of any over the counter medications.

Otherwise, debrox, baby oil, commercial drops may be used. Hydrogen peroxide can be used as well. The ear canal can be flushed with rubbing alcohol to displace water from the use of OTC medications.