



SOUTHWEST OHIO

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ENT SPECIALISTS

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CERUMEN (Ear Wax) REMOVAL TECHNIQUES

The most important aspect of cerumen is that it is **normal!** The Ear normally sheds its outer layer of skin, just as the rest of the body does. This exfoliated skin combines with oils from the tiny glands in the ear and makes the substance we call cerumen.

Most of the time the debris is pushed to the edge of the ear and it is lost in the shower, on the pillow, etc. It's when we place a cotton swab or other foreign object into our ear that this normal process gets disrupted. Occasionally, the cerumen builds up by itself. This can be for many reasons, including narrow ear canals, the wearing of hearing aids or ear plug use.

One simple way to keep the cerumen soft and manageable is to use hydrogen peroxide (H₂O₂). The peroxide should be diluted 50% with saline or water. I recommend putting a small bottle in the shower with an unused eye dropper. Once in the shower, place a few drops in each ear for approximately five minutes. A bubbling, cracking noise is normal. Then expose the ear to the shower for cleansing of the peroxide and the debris.

A small bulb syringe can be used as well. This process can be repeated as necessary.

There is an over the counter product called Debrox[®] that uses peroxide as its main ingredient as well. Hydrogen peroxide is a safe chemical, but should NEVER be used on perforated ear drums or those with ear ventilating tubes.

If infection or persistent blockage occurs you should schedule an appointment with your ENT doctor.

Head & Neck Surgery • Ear, Nose, Throat & Sinus Surgery • Pediatric ENT • Voice Analysis & Rehabilitation

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