

Advice for People with Ear Problems

- Keep your ear canals dry when washing your hair, showering or swimming. This can be done by using ear plugs or cotton wool covered in vaseline. Before going swimming check with your doctor or nurse that swimming will not harm your ears.
- Do not use cotton buds, hairgrips, matches etc., to clean or dry your ears. These damage the delicate lining of your ear canal and may even perforate your ear drum.
- Do not scratch your ears as this may spread infection.
- If you suffer from excessive wax, regular use of olive oil can help the ear clean itself. For details, please see your nurse or doctor.
- If you are to have your ears syringed to remove excess wax, you must inform the nurse before she starts if you have a perforated ear drum.
- If your symptoms do not improve with treatment, or if they get worse, consult your nurse or doctor.
- Try to keep your ears dry at all times.

Useful Contacts

Royal National Institute for Deaf People
19 - 23 Featherstone Street, London, EC1Y 8SL
Freephone: 0808 808 0123
Textphone: 0808 808 9000
Website: www.rnid.org.uk

**The British Deaf Association
Counselling Service**
13 Wilson Pattern Street, Warrington, WA1 1PG
Minicom: 01925 652529
Videophone: 01925 630169
Voicephone: 01925 652520
Website: www.bda.org.uk

British Tinnitus Association
Ground Floor, Unit 5 Acorn Business Park,
Woodseats Close, Sheffield, S8 0TB
Freephone: 0800 018 0527
Minicom: 0114 250 5694
Website: www.tinnitus.org.uk

Deafness Research UK
330/332 Gray's Inn Road, London, WC1X 8EE
Freephone: 0808 808 2222
Textphone: 020 7915 1412
Website: defeatingdeafness.org

The Ear

Useful Advice & Information



Parts of the Ear

Outer Ear

The outer ear is called the pinna, which is the part outside the body and the ear canal. This part of the ear conducts sound waves into the ear.

The Middle Ear

Sound waves travel through the middle ear. Special cells convert the sound signals which then travel along nerves to the brain.

The Inner Ear

The inner ear is a delicate part of the ear, with fluid filled 'canals'. It houses sensory cells and nerve endings which aid normal hearing.

How the Ear Works

The ear is made up of three parts, the outer, middle and inner ear. The visible part of the ear is called the pinna or auricle. It is shell shaped structure made of cartilage.

The pinna funnels sound waves towards the ear drum. When we hear sound the eardrum (tympanic membrane) vibrates in response to changes in air pressure.

The middle ear is a small cavity between the ear drum and the inner ear.

The snail like inner ear contains a maze of winding passages. This part of the ear deals with the reception and analysis of sound. It also keeps the body balanced.

Did You Know That?

- The ear consists of three parts: the outer, middle and inner ear.
- The ear acts as a sophisticated sound system.
- Our ears play an important role in maintaining our sense of balance, co-ordinating our head, eye and body movements.
- The complex folds which form the outer ear not only act as an amplifier, but also a shield, to stop objects, such as insects, entering the ear.
- The outer ear is made of cartilage, which is a dense connective tissue, it is flexible and supportive.
- In the UK, five million people could improve their hearing, if they wore hearing aids.

