

DON'T PUT ANYTHING SMALLER THAN YOUR ELBOW IN YOUR EAR!

Knitting needles, pencils, pen caps, cotton buds, long nail of the little finger - these are some of the things I have seen people insert into their ears to scratch, pick or wiggle up and down to relieve itching, or to remove debris. This isn't a good idea as it can introduce infection, damage the skin or tympanic membrane (eardrum) or impact the debris or wax further.

In March 1997, Brian Cranshaw, a chemical engineer from West London, returned to the UK after spending six months working in Nigeria. During his first week back, his wife complained that he wasn't hearing properly, he said that his ears hadn't recovered properly from the flight. The feelings grew worse over the following two weeks with tickling sensations deep in his ears. He thought it was loosened ear wax so he started fiddling, poking and prodding with a ballpoint pen. When he pressed the pen into his right ear, he heard a cracking sound and saw the pen was covered in a yellow goo. Thinking he had punctured his eardrum he went to his GP who subsequently reached into Brian's ear with a pair of tweezers and pulled out what appeared to be an insect antenna. During the examination, Brian was horrified to learn that he had a total of five African cockroaches living in his head. Four cockroaches were alive and one cockroach was dead (killed by a pen attack). An investigation revealed that when Brian was in Nigeria, a female African cockroach must have laid numerous eggs in the toiletries bag where he kept his cotton buds. When he was cleaning his ears, he was also transferring the cockroach eggs to his inner ear where they started to hatch!

If you think an insect has crawled into your ear, don't try and hook it out, shine a torch into the ear and it should crawl towards the light. Failing that, go to your GP.

Today, I wanted to talk to you about Hopi Ear Candles and their valuable role in helping relieve symptoms of, "glue ear", sinusitis, rhinitis, colds/flu, headaches and migraines, excessive or compacted ear wax, snoring or just to relax you from stress.

The 9" cylindrical shaped hollow candles each contain a filter which prevents any candle residues from entering the inside of the ear. When the candle is lit, the ingredients which are impregnated in the cotton, vaporise and are drawn down the hollow centre of the candle into the outer portion of the ear by a long established "chimney" principle, (heated, convectional air current flow). A mild suction occurs and the heat of the released, circulated vapours inside the ear, gently massage the tympanic membrane (ear drum). I always include a face and head massage to form an overall holistic treatment. Together they will soothe irritated areas, stimulate the peripheral blood circulation, intensify the immune system, strengthen the work of the lymph glands and stimulate energy points (on the external ear). All this is achieved whilst you feel comfortable and safe and totally relaxed. This is truly a very intense treatment but a thoroughly enjoyable and calming experience.

The candles are made from one hundred per cent pure Beeswax, Honey Extracts, Sage, St. John's Wort, Chamomile, Beta-Carotene (Vit. A), and a Pesticide free woven cotton:

Honey Extracts: Honey and bee pollen products have been clinically shown to help sufferers with hay fever. They work on the same principal as homeopathy by treating like with like. Taking a small amount regularly helps the body build resistance to allergens. Normally, the body releases antibodies to fight allergens, the antibodies release histamine which can cause swelling and irritation in the body's tissue.

Sage: (*Salvia Officinalis*), This herb is anti-inflammatory and astringent (tightening of the skin with constriction of the blood vessels with reduced blood flow and mucous secretions).

St. John's Wort: (*Hypericum Perforatum*), This plant is anti-inflammatory and astringent. It is gently relaxing and has a restorative effect on the nervous excitability.

Chamomile: (*Anthemis Nobilis - Roman Chamomile*), This perennial herb is anti-inflammatory, astringent and is useful for mental stress, anxiety and nervous excitability.

Beta-Carotene: (Vit A), Vitamin A was the first vitamin to be discovered. It fights infections and strengthens the immune system.

The symptoms of impacted wax can include, *Mild deafness, * Earache, *A sensation of fullness inside the ear, * Tinnitus (ringing in the ear), *Dizziness. Wax isn't all bad - it keeps your ear dry and helps prevent infection, so you don't want to eliminate wax, but just keep it from blocking your ear

The ear canal is shaped like an hourglass. The skin on the outer part of the canal has special glands that produce earwax. The purpose of this natural wax is to repel water and to trap dust and sand particles. Ear wax is helpful in normal amounts because it coats the skin of the ear canal where it acts as a temporary water repellent. The absence of ear wax may result in dry, itchy ears and even infection. Under normal circumstances you should never have to clean your ear canals. Wax is constantly travelling towards the outer ear where it can drop out - actions of the jaw (talking and chewing), help to "massage" the wax out of the ear canal. The wax you see is a combination of cerumen, (wax), shed skin cells and dirt, but a number of things can cause a build-up of impacted wax:- narrow ear canals, working in a dusty or dirty environment, wearing hearing aids or ear plugs, poking and prodding with anything smaller than your elbow!