

HOW TO USE YOUR EAR DROPS AND CREAMS

Ear, Nose & Throat Department

This information sheet is designed to help you use the treatment your doctor has given you. Any further questions, please discuss these with our staff.

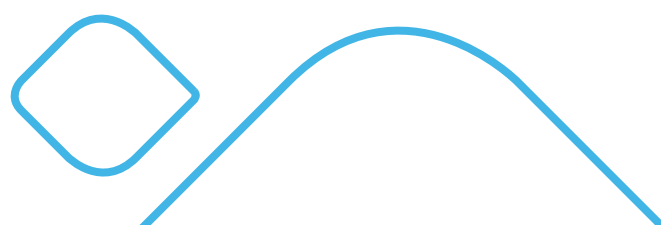
What are ear drops?

Ear drops are drops which contain medicine such as antibiotics, anti-fungals or steroid in a liquid form that are put into the outer ear canal. Ear drops are used for a variety of conditions such as outer ear infections, eczema of the ear or ear wax.



How to use your ear drops?

Your doctor has prescribed you topical ear drops to use. Depending on the reason for having the ear drops will depend on how often you need to use them and for how long. Different ear drops will contain different medications such as antibiotics, steroids and/or antifungals. There are also non-medicated ear drops used for ear wax. Your doctor will prescribe the drops most appropriate for your condition.



How to apply ear drops?

1. Position your head so that the ear faces upwards. This is often easier lying on your side on your bed or sofa with the affected ear upwards.
2. Gently pull the earlobe **up and back** in adults (figure 1) and **down and back** in children (figure 2).

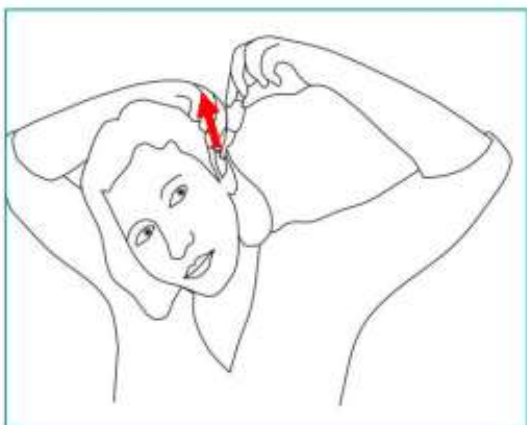


Figure 1 – Application of drops in Adult

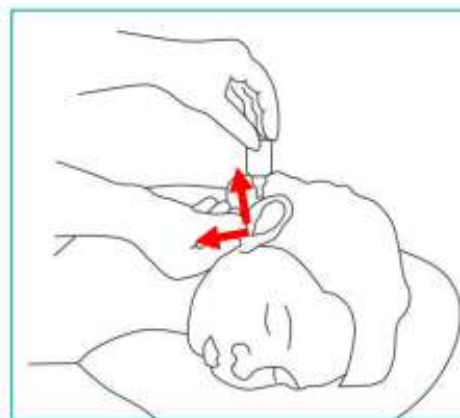


Figure 2 – Application of drops in children

This is sometimes easier to do if you have someone who can help you.

3. Apply the ear drops into the ear canal. Your doctor will have given you instructions on how many drops and how often you need to apply them.
4. Stay with your ear facing upwards for five minutes and gently move your earlobe up and down to allow the drops to run into the ear.
5. Wipe away any excess liquid with a clean tissue.

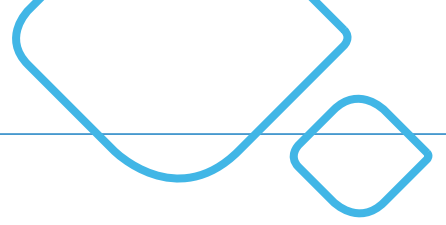
How long do I need to use my ear drops?

This will depend on why your doctor has given you ear drops. Often the course is for one or two weeks but it may be longer.

How can I prevent getting an infection?

There are a number of things you can do to help improve your symptoms and prevent getting infections:

- Avoid using cotton wool buds or putting your fingers in your ears. This causes wax and skin cells to push further into the ear canal and can cause trauma.
- If you are prone to getting ear infections you could use ear plugs or swimming caps over your ears to avoid getting water in your ears when swimming.
- Avoid getting water in your ears as much as possible.



How can I keep my ear dry?

If you have an active ear infection it is recommended to avoid swimming to keep your ear dry. Also avoid putting your head under water when bathing. Whilst showering you can use cotton wool and Vaseline® in the ear to stop excessive water from leaking in.

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If you would like this leaflet in email form, large print, braille or another language, please contact the Patient Support and Complaints team on 01225 825656.

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