

# Hydrogen Peroxide

## Ear Drops

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### You will need:

- 3% Hydrogen Peroxide. This can be purchased from any chemist without needing a prescription.
- If your chemist only sells 6% solution, dilute 50:50 with sterile water (also bought at your chemist).
- 3-5ml syringe or a medicine dropper.

When instilled in the ear you will feel a warm tingling sensation, and a bubbling/fizzing sound (sometimes described a little like 'Rice-Bubbles').

Once you are used to the feeling, the solution should be left to bubble and fizz in the ear for up to one minute at a time, although when you first use it you may only tolerate the feeling for a few seconds.

This solution is safe in all ears, even when you have grommets or an eardrum perforation.

### Instructions for use:

- Place your head on side. Use the syringe or dropper to fill up the ear with the solution (around 1-3 ml) in adults, 0.5ml in children).
- 'Pump' the solution within the ear canal using the 'triangle' of skin and cartilage in front to the ear canal for about 30sec.
- Allow it to bubble and fizz before tipping it out onto a tissue.
- The ear canal will dry itself in the next minute or so.

### Use of Antibiotic Ear-drops and Hydrogen Peroxide:

The peroxide will damage the active ingredients in antibiotics. It is important that there is a 30-minute gap between hydrogen peroxide (best used first) and antibiotic drops.

### Frequency of Use:

- If used for treatment of ear infections (outer or middle ear), please use three times a day in combination with the antibiotic drops prescribed by your doctor. Use the hydrogen peroxide first and allow a 30-minute gap between it and other drops.
- If you are prone to recurrent outer ear infections ('otitis externa'), using hydrogen peroxide alone when you feel the first symptoms of an infection can sometimes avoid the need for antibiotic drops. Use it three times a day for a week, and see your doctor if symptoms of infection get worse.
- If used to prevent excessive wax buildup, use according to the frequency with which your ears block. If you need to have then cleaned out three times per year, use hydrogen peroxide three times/week. Twice yearly, twice weekly, and so on.
- If your ears are blocked by wax, use hydrogen peroxide 2-3 times a day for two weeks before your appointment to loosen the wax up prior to your appointment. This may remove all the wax in itself and avoid the need for cleaning altogether.
- If you get recurrent ear wax buildup needing cleaning, using hydrogen peroxide on a regular basis can prevent wax build-up. As a rough rule of thumb, if you need your ears cleaned once a year, use hydrogen peroxide once a week. Twice a year, twice weekly, and so on.
- Some children tolerate hydrogen peroxide, well, some hate it. It's not worth persisting if they are in the latter group, as they may end up refusing to use any ear drops (including antibiotics).

**If your ear symptoms are made worse by hydrogen peroxide drops, or you find them too painful to use, please stop their use and discuss this with your doctor.**