

CERUMEN/IMPACTED EAR
Level II
(No Level I)

Skill Level: RN

Definition: Cerumen is a secretory product of water from the ceruminous glands and oil from the sebaceous glands. Ears may become impacted.

MODERATE	
Subjective: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• My ear feels plugged.• I've been having trouble hearing lately.• May have mild ear discomfort.	Assessment: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Alteration in comfort.• Potential for hearing loss.• Cerumen impacted ear/Ear irrigation.
Objective: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Possible discomfort when external ear manipulated.• Tympanic membrane not visible due to cerumen (yellow to dark brown in color) and may occlude ear canal.• No erythema or drainage.	Plan: <p>At nursing discretion may use any or all of below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Irrigate ear canal with warm water.• Debrox 5 gtts BID x 3 days, then recheck in clinic. If canal is still occluded, irrigate ear canal with warm water.• May recheck after irrigation in 24 hours to check for canal irritation.• If erythema or drainage are present consider otitis externa protocol.

Nursing Education:

1. Some cerumen is normal and has antibacterial properties.
- Ascertain that patient does not have a perforated tympanic membrane, after treatment examine ear.
 - Canal may become mildly erythematous with irrigations. Do not treat for infection if mild redness is present up to 2-3 days after irrigation.

Patient Teaching:

1. Keep foreign objects out of ear canal.
2. Use a washcloth and warm water in the shower.
3. While shampooing hair, to soften wax, let water gently run into ear.

Cerumen/Impacted Ear - Level II

APPROVED:

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Date

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