

# Listen to your ears

It's easy to take hearing for granted. But without proper care of your ears, you could end up with hearing loss or ear problems.



## **WORRIED ABOUT WAX**

Your body makes ear wax to protect your ears. Wax keeps dust and other particles from getting inside.

Only clean the outside of your ears with a tissue, washcloth or cotton swab. Never stick anything, including a cotton swab, in your ear. This will push wax farther down into the ear and can create a harmful blockage.

If you feel that there's a lot of wax in the ear, you can safely try to soften it with a drop of mineral oil or glycerin. Your doctor can also remove ear wax blockages without damaging your ear.



## **SAYING NO TO NOISE**

One of the most common reasons people lose their hearing is exposure to loud noises. This can happen very quickly after a loud sound like an explosion. Or, it can happen over time if a person is exposed to loud sounds for months or years.

You can help prevent noise-induced hearing loss with one simple tool: ear plugs. Wear them when going to a loud concert, watching fireworks or attending loud events. Wear them when mowing the lawn or using loud power equipment at home.

If you have a job where you are exposed to noise, make sure you are using the right hearing protection. You may need something more powerful than ear plugs for certain jobs. Talk about this with your employer.



## **USE HEADPHONES WITH CARE**

The World Health Organization says people should limit how much they use headphones. Don't use them more than one hour a day. Keep the volume as low as possible, but no louder than 60 percent.

Noise-cancelling headphones help you keep the volume low because they block out sounds around you. But, you should not use these when driving, cycling or walking because you won't be able to hear possible dangers nearby.

Talk to your doctor about your hearing health. Together, you can decide when you may need a hearing test.

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