

Ear Canal - Itchy

Definition

- A child who itches the ear canal
- No crying or report of ear pain

Health Information

Causes

- Main cause (older children): using cotton-tipped swabs. This causes earwax buildup.
- Can also be leaving soap or shampoo in the ear canal
- Can also be caused by a piece of earwax in the ear canal.
- Simple ear itching without other symptoms such as fever or crying is harmless. It is not a sign of an ear infection.

Care Advice

1. **Overview:**
 - Itchy ear canals are common
 - Here is some care advice that should help.
2. **White Vinegar Eardrops:**
 - For an itchy ear canal, use half-strength white vinegar. Make this by mixing the vinegar with equal parts warm water.
 - Place 2 drops in each ear canal once daily.
 - Do this for three days.
 - Reason: Restores the normal acid pH.
 - Caution: Do not use eardrops if your child has ear drainage or ear tubes. Also, do not use if your child has a hole in eardrum.
3. **Keep Soap Out of the Ears:**
 - Keep soap and shampoo out of the ear canal.
 - Reason: Makes the ears itchy.
4. **Do Not Use Cotton Swabs:**
 - Cotton swabs can push earwax back and cause a plug.
 - In older children, cotton swabs may remove all the earwax. This leads to itching and irritation.
 - Earwax has a purpose. It protects the lining of the ear canal.
 - Earwax also comes out on its own.
 - Q-tips should never be used before the teen years. Reason: They are wider than the ear canal.
5. **What to Expect:**
 - With this treatment, most itching is gone in 2 or 3 days.

Call Your Doctor If

- Itching of ear lasts more than 1 week
- You think your child needs to be seen
- Your child becomes worse

Pediatric Care Advice

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