

14. Ear Irrigation and Care

Ear Irrigation and Care ¹⁸³				
Task / Activity	Self-Assessment / Date	Competency Assessed Y / N	Competency Achieved	Signed off by Clinical Assessor / Date
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate an understanding of the holistic care of patients requiring ear irrigation. • Demonstrate an understanding of the anatomy and physiology of the ear. • Demonstrate an understanding of the pathophysiology of hearing loss. • Demonstrate an understanding of the importance of excluding impacted wax as a cause for hearing loss to allow for ongoing investigation as indicated.¹⁸⁴ • Demonstrate an understanding of the need for urgent onward referral in patients presenting with red flag symptoms.¹⁸⁵ • Demonstrate an understanding of the relating to the ear irrigation procedure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The associate risks. ○ The contraindications. ○ Safe and effective pre-assessment. • Demonstrate an understanding of the equipment used to perform ear irrigation, including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Its full functionality. ○ Manufacturer's instructions for cleaning and decontamination. • Demonstrate an understanding of the safety netting advice to be provided to patient's post-procedure. <p>Patient Care</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be able to ensure that immediately prior to the procedure a thorough assessment of the ear has been carried out by a GP or ACP. • Be able to elicit a full history of previous ear problems to identify any contraindications and discuss any concerns with a senior clinician. • Be able to elicit the patients understanding of the procedure and provide education about how the procedure may feel¹⁸⁶, what the effects may be afterwards. • Be able to ensure all equipment needed is available to provide safe, effective, and comfortable irrigation for the patient.¹⁸⁷ 				

¹⁸³ http://www.earcarecentre.com/uploadedFiles/Pages/Health_Professionals/Protocols/Ear%20irrigation%20guidelines%202022.pdf

¹⁸⁴ <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng98/chapter/Recommendations#assessment-and-referral>

¹⁸⁵ <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng98/chapter/Recommendations#assessment-and-referral>

¹⁸⁶ [http://www.earcarecentre.com/uploadedFiles/Pages/Patients/Leaflets/Irrigation\(1\).pdf](http://www.earcarecentre.com/uploadedFiles/Pages/Patients/Leaflets/Irrigation(1).pdf)

¹⁸⁷ http://www.earcarecentre.com/uploadedFiles/Pages/Health_Professionals/Protocols/Ear%20irrigation%20guidelines%202022.pdf

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be able to perform the ear irrigation procedure in line with training, local and national guidelines.¹⁸⁸ • Be able to identify complications arising as a result of irrigation and manage appropriately referring on to a senior clinician where appropriate. • Be able to provide robust safety netting and aftercare advice ensuring this includes the red flags for infection and trauma post-procedure.¹⁸⁹ • Be able to provide the patient with health promotion advice about on-going ear care to try to prevent future wax.¹⁹⁰ • Be able to identify when patient complexity exceeds competence and refer on to a suitable senior clinician. 				

¹⁸⁸ <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng98/chapter/Recommendations#removing-earwax>

¹⁸⁹ <http://www.earcarecentre.com/uploadedFiles/Pages/Patients/Leaflets/Post-Irrigation%20advice.pdf>

¹⁹⁰ [http://www.earcarecentre.com/uploadedFiles/Pages/Patients/Leaflets/A%20leaflet%20for%20Patients\(1\).pdf](http://www.earcarecentre.com/uploadedFiles/Pages/Patients/Leaflets/A%20leaflet%20for%20Patients(1).pdf)