**Ear Irrigation - Statement from Wiltshire Clinical Commissioning Group**

The vast majority of patients presenting with ear problems to their GP are treated by the GP or Practice Nurse, with advice about ear wax removal which is in line with the Wiltshire CCG guidelines. A referral from your GP to a hospital for ear wax removal is only commissioned for patients meeting certain criteria, including;

* Patients with acute otitis externa up to a maximum of three appointments per year (To be monitored via the audit process)
* Patients who require Micro-suction prior to the assessment, fitting or review of a hearing aid
* The tympanic membrane is obscured by wax but needs to be viewed to establish a diagnosis
* There is a foreign body, including vegetable matter, in the ear canal that could swell during irrigation

However, the CCG also recognises that patients suffering from significant symptoms due to ear wax build up (including hearing loss or pain) and affecting a patient’s condition may warrant micro-suction, where one or more of the following has occurred:

* Previously undergone ear surgery (other than grommets insertion that have been extruded for at least 18 months)
* A recent history of Otalgia and /or middle ear infection (in past 6 weeks);
* A retraction pocket or a cholesteatoma
* Has a current perforation or history of ear discharge in the past 12 months;
* Previous complications following ear irrigation including perforation of the ear drum, severe pain, deafness, or vertigo;
* Ear drops have been unsuccessful and irrigation has been unsuccessful or is unavailable

If all of the above criteria are met, a prior approval application may be made from your GP and will be granted for on-going treatment (to a maximum limit).

Further details are available on Wiltshire CCG’s website at: <http://www.wiltshireccg.nhs.uk/what-we-do-and-dont-fund> and specifically <http://www.wiltshireccg.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/SW-CP004-Micro-suction-V3.pdf>.

Self-care guidelines are available at: <http://www.wiltshireccg.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Blocked-ears-wax-self-guidelines-for-patients.pdf>.