

## F-110 Ear Instillations and Irrigations

### Purpose

Treat an infection and reduce inflammation.

Administer medications into the ear.

Irrigate or remove impacted cerumen or purulent discharge from the ear.

Improve impaired hearing caused by ear wax.

### Applies To

Registered Nurses

Licensed Practical/Vocational Nurses

Other (*Identify*): \_\_\_\_\_

### Equipment/Supplies

- Medication and or irrigation solution as ordered.
- Small bulb syringe.
- Sterile basin for irrigating solution.
- Basin or bowl for drainage.
- Cotton balls and cotton tipped applicators.
- Plastic sheet or garbage bag.
- Disposable gloves.

### Procedure

#### ***Medication administration:***

1. Wash hands. Refer to the Hand Washing procedure. Follow infection control guidelines
2. Don clean gloves.
3. Have the client sit on side of bed, lie on side with the ear to be medicated up, or sit up in chair, as appropriate.
4. Straighten ear canal:
  - a. For adults, pull auricle upward and outward.
  - b. For children, pull auricle down and back. *This provides direct access to deeper external ear structures.*
5. With cotton-tipped swab, gently wipe out drainage or wax, if present. *Do not Force wax back inward to block or occlude ear canal.*
6. Hold the dropper 1/2 inch above the ear canal. Instill drops as prescribed.

7. Apply gentle pressure or massage to tragus of the ear. *This moves medication down ear canal and assists to completely distribute the medication.*
8. If ordered by the physician, insert a portion of the cotton ball into the Outermost part of the canal and remove after fifteen minutes.
9. Remove gloves and dispose of supplies according to the Agency Waste Disposal Policy.

**Irrigations:**

1. Follow steps 1-4 as above.
2. Irrigation solution should be at body temperature.
3. Place basin under client's ear.
4. Client may hold if he/she is able. Fill syringe with irrigation solution, expel air, and insert the tip of syringe into the external ear canal.
5. Irrigate as prescribed (Stop immediately if client complains of pain).
6. Dry the external canal.
7. Position client on affected side for few minutes to promote drainage
8. Wash hands. Refer to Hand Washing procedure.

**Documentation Guidelines**

Document in the clinical record:

1. Medication name, dose, route, and time of administration.
2. Appearance of ear and any drainage.
3. Color, consistency and amount of any discharge or drainage.
4. Client response to treatment instruction given.

**Related Procedures**

Ear Irrigation

**Policy History**

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