

## H-130 Ear Irrigation

### Purpose

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

- Ear irrigation syringe.
- Basin.
- Towels.
- Cotton balls.
- Cotton-tipped applicators.
- Medication/irrigation solution.
- Disposable gloves.

### Procedure

1. Wash hands. Refer to Hand Washing procedure.
2. Don clean gloves.
3. Position the client in a sitting or lying position with head turned toward the affected ear.
4. Place towel under the client's head and shoulders and have the client hold basin under the affected ear.
5. Warm the irrigating solution to body temperature (95° to 100°). *Solution should not exceed 10°. Hot or cold fluid may cause vertigo or nausea.*
6. Clean the outer ear with cotton-tipped applicators. *Do not force drainage or cerumen into the ear canal.*
7. Fill the syringe with irrigating solution (approximately 50 ml).
8. Straighten the auditory canal:
  - a. For adults, pull auricle upward and outward.
  - b. For children, pull auricle down and backward.
9. Hold the tip of the syringe 1/2 inch above the opening to the ear canal. Slowly instill fluid into ear. Direct the stream of fluid against the sides of the canal. *Do not occlude the canal with the tip of the syringe. Discontinue procedure if client complains of discomfort.*
10. Continue irrigating until canal is clear or solution is used up.

11. Dry outer ear with cotton ball. Leave cotton loosely in place for five to ten minutes to absorb excess fluid.
12. Clean reusable equipment and dispose of supplies as outlined in the Agency Waste Disposal Policy.
13. Remove gloves and wash hands. Refer to Hand Washing procedure.

**Documentation Guidelines**

Document in the clinical record:

1. Ear procedure performed.
2. Characteristics of drainage noted.
3. The client's tolerance of the procedure.
4. Report any client discomfort to physician.

**Related Procedures**

Ear Instillations and Irrigation

**Policy History**

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