

# 10 Ear Care Tips

1. Clean your ears with extra care. Wipe the outer ear with a washcloth or tissue. Do not put anything into your ear. Do not use Q-tips, bobby pins or sharp pointed objects to clean your ears. These objects may injure the ear canal or eardrum.
2. Dry your ears thoroughly after exposure to moisture from swimming or bathing. Dry only your outer ear, wiping it slowly and gently with a soft towel or cloth. Tip your head to the side to help water drain from your ear canal.
3. If you have pierced ears, clean your earrings and earlobes regularly with rubbing alcohol.
4. Earwax is the ear's mechanism for self-cleaning. If you have a build-up of wax that is blocking your hearing, see your doctor to have it removed.
5. Reduce the risk of ear infections by treating upper respiratory (ears, nose, throat) infections promptly.
6. Take breaks when listening to music through earbuds or headphones.
7. Always wear hearing protection during exposure to loud levels of noise. This includes mowing the lawn, leaf blowing or using power tools. By law, a noisy work environment requires use of hearing protection.

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8. Have your ears checked regularly by your primary care physician. Have your hearing checked by an audiologist if you or anyone else questions whether your hearing is normal or you are exposed to loud noise. Consult an otolaryngologist as necessary.
9. When outdoors in sunny weather, remember to use a sunscreen on the outer parts of your ears.
10. When it's cold outside, make sure to wear a hat, headband or earmuffs that cover your ears to prevent frostbite.

Make an appointment to see your doctor if you experience any of the following symptoms:

- Drainage from the ear
- Itching or pain in your ears
- Sudden hearing loss or constant noise in your ears or head
- Unusual hearing, balance problems, or ringing in the ears
- If you notice unusual bumps or scaly areas on the exterior ear