

<p>Status: Standard Procedure: Specifies the procedures to be followed, only in exceptional circumstances should these not be followed.</p>	<p>Policy No: CLSP 13 Version No: 0 Date Approved: 01/03/11 Review Date: 01/03/13</p>
<p>Title: Standard Procedure for Insertion of Ear Drops</p>	
<p>Written by: Clinical Practice Project Group</p>	
<p>Approved by: National Risk Management Committee</p>	
<p>Cross Reference: CLSP 01, CLSP02, IG02, IGO5</p>	

1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to ensure the safe insertion of ear drops to Cheshire Ireland service users.

2.0 Scope

All Cheshire Ireland services where medication is administered to Cheshire service users.

3.0 Responsibility

- It is the responsibility of all staff who administers medication to follow this standard procedure.
- It is the responsibility of service managers to ensure staff are familiar with the standard procedure and to monitor compliance.

4.0 Definition

Ear wax

Wax is a natural secretion of fats and oil produced in the ear and it consists of dead skin, hair and dust. Small amounts are made all the time and they fall out of the ear by migration, a process aided by jaw movement. It lubricates, repels water and protects the ear by trapping dust and other particles. It is slightly acidic, giving bactericidal and antifungal properties (protection from bacteria and fungi) and its absence may cause dryness, irritation and itching. A build-up of wax is more likely to occur in hearing aid users, if there is an anatomical abnormality of the ear canal, and in older adults.

5.0 Procedure

Insertion of drops into the ear canal:

- Staff member will engage with the service user and confirm that they are ready.
- Apply the 7 rights of medication administration. (CLSP 02)
- Warm the dropper bottle to room temperature before using. (Let the bottle stand in the room for about half an hour/place them in your pocket for half an hour).
- Wash and dry hands and don gloves
- Support the service user to tilt with the affected ear towards the ceiling.
- Clean outer ear with cotton swabs, not in the ear canal
- With one hand, pull the top of the ear upwards and outwards to straighten the ear canal.
- Apply prescribed dose of ear drop to the ear canal.
- The service user needs to be supported to hold his/her head with the affected ear pointing upwards as is prescribed following both the doctors and manufacturer's instructions
- Using a small piece of cotton wool block the canal so that medication does not leak out
- Wipe the excess drops that pool outside the ear.
- When some time has elapsed, remove the cotton ball from the ear and place in clinical waste container.
- Wash hands
- If at any point the service user is uncomfortable or distressed, stop before starting again
- Medication Administration Record is signed
- Report any adverse reactions; itching, changes in hearing, balance, infection or severe pain to lead clinical person/line manager /G.P. Record in Best Possible health Daily Continuation Sheet

Troubleshooting:

- The ear is a sensitive and easily damaged sensory organ. Frequent, zealous use of such instruments as cotton buds, rolled towel ends, hair grips etc can lead to impaction (a buildup of wax tightly packed together).
- A build-up of wax may also occur with anxiety, stress and dietary or hereditary factors.
- Do not try to clean the ear canal (the passage leading from the outer ear to the eardrum) with cotton wool buds etc. This can make things worse as you will push some wax deeper inside. It may also cause an ear infection. Let the ear 'clean itself.'

- Some drops contain coconut or almond oil and cannot be used if service user has a nut allergy.
- It is important to have an awareness of the possibility of hearing impairment. Hearing loss may be a significant factor in deteriorating communication skills. Refer to BPH plan hearing review.
- Changes in shampoo, hair products or detergents can cause the pinna (earlobe), surrounding skin to become red or excoriated.

6.0 References

An Bord Altranais (2003) *Guidance to Nurses and Midwives on Medication Management*. www.anbortaltranais.ie

An Bord Altranais (2007) *Guidance to Nurses and Midwives on Medication Management*. www.anbortaltranais.ie

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