



Michael G. Gartlan, MD, FAAP, FACS
Rajeev H. Mehta, MD, FACS
Scott W. Divenere, MD
Sung J. Chung, MD
Ankit M. Patel, MD
Matthew R. Bartindale, MD

2201 Glenwood Ave., Joliet, IL 60435
(815) 725-1191, (815) 725-1248 fax

1890 Silver Cross Blvd.
Pavilion A, Suite 435
New Lenox, IL 60451
(815) 717-8768

900 W. Route 6, Suite 960, Morris, IL 60450
(815) 941-1972

EAR IRRIGATIONS

Irrigating the ear involves washing the external ear with a stream of acidic solution to clean the canal of debris, to relieve localized inflammation and discomfort, and to get the skin back to its normal pH. The procedure must be performed carefully to avoid causing pain or dizziness.

Equipment and Preparation

- Ear syringe or baby bulb syringe
- Prescribed solution
- Small basin or towel

To make the prescribed solution, use a **1:1 ratio of rubbing alcohol and white vinegar**. If you experience a burning or stinging sensation with this mixture, you may need to dilute the solution with water. The mixture would then be **1/3 rubbing alcohol, 1/3 white vinegar, and 1/3 water**.

Procedure

- For safety it is recommended that you sit down while doing the washing. If you prefer to lean over a sink, be sure to have a chair close by to sit in if you begin to feel any dizziness or nausea.
- Place a towel on your shoulder under the ear to be cleaned.
- Draw the solution into the syringe. **Try to bring the solution as close to body temperature as possible.** You help with this by putting the syringe in your pocket for 20 minutes before putting in your ear. Extreme temperatures can cause vertigo or ear canal burns.
- Tilt your head toward your shoulder with the ear to be cleaned positioned upward.
- Gently syringe the solution into your ear canal. If possible, it is easier to have a friend or family member perform this step.
- To drain the ear canal, place your head with the ear being cleaned down to the shoulder and remain there until all solution drains out. Dry your ear and neck and remove the towel. You may place a cotton ball in the opening of the ear if needed.
- Sometimes this solution can lead to a stinging pain or vertigo. If this occurs, it does not mean that damage has occurred. Diluting with water, as mentioned above, can help reduce stinging pain if present. In very rare scenarios, if you push too hard irrigating can damage the ear drum. This would cause abrupt pain and vertigo. Notify our office (815.725.1191) if you think you may have damaged your ear drum or if you cannot tolerate irrigations.
- Once completed, remove any excess solution from the syringe. When the syringe is empty, remove the plunger store both pieces in a well-ventilated area to prevent bacterial growth.

Please irrigate your ear _____ times per _____ for _____.