

## 10 Easy rules to maintain your hearing

- If you suffer sudden severe hearing loss, **see a doctor urgently**. If you have some hearing loss and your hearing doesn't return to normal within two days, see your doctor.
- Don't put foreign objects into your ear canal. The wax in your ear canal will make its own way to your outer ear.
- During high speed water sports like water skiing, wear a swim cap or approved swimmers earplugs.
- Avoid prolonged or repeated exposure to loud noise.
- Always wear safety approved earplugs or earmuffs when mowing the lawn, using power tools, shooting a gun or in any noisy environment.
- A sudden change in air pressure while scuba diving can cause inner ear damage, dizziness and hearing loss. Equalise regularly during descent. If you are having difficulties seek professional advice before you dive again.
- Listen to music at a sensible volume. Don't have the volume up too loud for long periods, especially on a personal stereo when you are using headphones.
- Avoid flying if you have a heavy cold. Ears may be unable to clear during changes in air pressure and this could lead to a ruptured eardrum or inner ear damage.
- If you or your child has earache see your doctor. Earache is often a sign of an ear infection which, if not treated, can lead to hearing loss.
- Don't use cotton wool instead of earplugs. Cotton wool offers no hearing protection at all. It can also damage the ear if pushed too far in.

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