

## VINEGAR EAR IRRIGATIONS

### Why Ear Flushing?

Most outer ear infections are caused or worsened significantly by moisture accumulating in the ear canal. This can occur in patients with skin problems of the ear canal, in people that wear hearing aids or after surgery. Drying the ear on a regular basis helps resolve the problem and is often all that is required. Irrigating your ear with white vinegar helps remove moisture and debris and dries the ear- the vinegar acidifies the ear, killing bacteria and fungi that can cause ear infections. The flushing rinses away debris that can collect and cause recurrent infections- use of antibiotics and antibiotic ear drops can frequently be avoided.

The irrigations may sting initially but this should significantly diminish with subsequent irrigations.

It may also be helpful to keep water out of your ear. Use cotton soaked in Vaseline or an earplug for showering/washing hair. Do not swim without an earplug. Custom earplugs can be made.

### How to Prepare Ear Flush Solution

Rubber Bulb Ear Syringe



Buy white table vinegar. Mix a 50/50 solution of vinegar and water into a clean jar (equal parts vinegar and water). Draw up the solution into the syringe. Cover the jar and store at room temperature.

The irrigation solution must be body temperature. If the solution is too warm or too cold, you will feel dizzy. Warm the solution by placing the syringe with the tip up in a cup of hot water. Do not warm the solution in the stove or in a microwave.

Buy an ear syringe or rubber bulb at your local drugstore.

### How to Flush Your Ear

Rinse the ear by squirting the solution in your ear several times, allowing the solution to run into the ear and back out again. Most people do this over the sink with a towel on their shoulder or in the shower. After flushing, you may dry the ear with a hair drier on low heat setting.

### How Often to Flush Your Ear

Ask your care provider what is right for you. At first, you may need to flush the ear once a day. Often, less frequent use is needed over time. Many patients can flush the ear once a week or once a month and reduce the risk of recurrent infections.

### If it Stings when you Flush

An inflamed ear may sting when you start. This may be uncomfortable but will not injure the ear. The discomfort often gets better with repeated use.