

## HEARING

A hearing screening test is a good idea if you are not sure whether or you have issues with your hearing. If a problem is identified, it will be recommended that you go on to have a full diagnostic hearing test. The Doctors at the Silverstream Health Centre can perform hearing screening tests and make recommendations based on your findings.

### Hearing related risk factors

- Ageing: 25% of people 65 – 75 years old, and 70-80% of people over 75 years old have some degree of hearing loss
- Noise Exposure: Both long and short-term noise exposure can damage your hearing
- Diabetes: Hearing loss is twice as common in people with diabetes
- Ototoxicity: There are more than 200 medications on the market today that are known to cause hearing loss
- Smoking: Current smokers have a 70% higher risk of having hearing loss than non-smokers
- Heart Health: Inadequate blood flow and trauma to the blood vessels of the inner ear can cause hearing loss
- Head or Ear Trauma: Particularly to the temporal bone, ear trauma can cause conductive and sensorineural hearing impairment
- Tinnitus: Affects 1 in 5 people. 90% of people with tinnitus also have a hearing loss

### ACC

If your type of work has taken a toll on your hearing, you might be eligible for funding from ACC. ACC may contribute towards the cost of your hearing aids, hearing aid maintenance and repairs, and replacement of batteries as you need them. For more information visit ACC [here](#).

### Earwax build-up and removal

Earwax is naturally produced by the body to protect the inside of your ear from water and infection.

The amount of earwax produced varies from person to person. Usually, earwax moves slowly from the inside to the outside of your ear, where it is washed. Sometimes the wax builds up and forms a plug which blocks the ear. In some cases, the wax plug falls out by itself without any treatment. At other times, the build-up needs treatment.

### How is wax build-up treated?

#### Ear drops

You can soften the wax by using olive oil, baby oil or ear drops such as Waxsol or Cerumol which can be bought from your pharmacy. Place a few drops in your ear each day for 3 to 7 days to soften and loosen the wax, so that it falls out naturally.

#### Syringing or ear irrigation

Ear syringing is commonly used to remove wax build-up. This is a procedure performed by the Doctors and Nurses at the Silverstream Health Centre. Warm water is squirted into your ear which weakens and dislodges the wax. The wax

flows out of the ear with the water. Ear syringing isn't usually painful, but it can be quite uncomfortable and can make you feel dizzy.

To be effective, you must have used ear drops or olive oil drops for at least 5 days before ear syringing. Ear syringing is not suitable for everybody, for example, if you have a hole in the eardrum (perforation), have had ear surgery in the past or have a weakened immune system.