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Ear cleaning  
Reuters

## [A Small Guide to Ear Cleaning](#)

*Doctors claim that sticking ear-cleaning tools inside the ears is bad*

Physicians concur on the fact that Q-tips and other such devices that are introduced in the ears for cleaning purposes have a major negative impact on ear-health in the long run.

Here's why some clinical guidelines in this regard have been released at last.

There are about 12 million patients suffering from impacted earwax each year. The number is way too big to be ignored as it is - there are many other illnesses that far less people suffer from and which receive more attention from the specialists. This is why the American Academy of Otolaryngology - Head and Neck Surgery Foundation, through otolaryngologist Dennis Fitzgerald, addresses earwax impaction. The fact that cerumen (the technical name for earwax) is actually a self-cleaning, beneficial agent with ear-protective properties should be common knowledge. Contrary to popular belief and practice, it should only be removed when it accumulates up to a point where it becomes less beneficial, by causing hearing problems or pain. No effective way, natural or otherwise, has been discovered in order to prevent earwax impaction, but still, the insertion of cotton-tipped swabs or any other such items into the ear canal is strongly contraindicated. People prone to cerumen impaction are advised to seek clinical help every six to twelve months for routine control and cleaning. Appropriate cerumen-removal techniques involve the usage of wax-dissolving (cerumenolytic) agents, like water or saline, ear irrigation (the injection of a water stream inside the ear canal - performed by a doctor) or manual displacement by means of special tools or suction devices. On the other hand, potential harmful actions include: inserting inappropriate objects into the ear canal, oral jet irrigator usage, and ear candling (the introduction of a tube coated with paraffin inside the ear canal and lighting it).