

Community resource 4: Care of the ears: important DOs and DON'Ts

DOs:

- Ask for a hearing screening test for your baby
- If you suspect someone has a hearing loss, refer them urgently to a health worker. This is especially important for infants and children.
- Get help if a person has persistent ear-ache, ear discharge or any other problems with the ear
- Make others aware of an individual's hearing loss so that they can adapt their method of communication to suit the person with hearing loss
- See a health worker or attend a clinic to have earwax or foreign objects in the ear removed
- Assist young children and adults with the care and maintenance of their hearing devices
- Go to the clinic and/or see a doctor if your child has a cold that does not seem to improve
- Encourage the use of hearing protections for those working in noisy environments
- Encourage families and teachers of someone with hearing loss to learn sign language
- Trust your instinct! If you suspect something is wrong with your hearing, seek help
- Only use medications in your ears that have been prescribed for you by the doctor

DONT's:

- DON'T put anything in the ear to clean it. These include cotton buds, clips, toothpicks, sticks or hopi candles

Remember that wax is produced by the ear to protect the ear and keep it clean. Cotton buds should never be used (not even for regular cleaning), as they may push wax further into the ear and cause damage to the ear-drum. Sometimes the ear bud may remain behind as a foreign body!

- DON'T ignore an ear that has any pus or fluid coming out of it
- DON'T treat any ear conditions with hot or cold oil, herbal remedies or liquids such as kerosene
- DON'T swim or wash in dirty water
- DON'T listen to very loud noises or music for long periods as this can cause permanent hearing loss