

Ear candles

Type	Safety	Efficacy	Recommended?
	3	3	
Device	Evidence of harm	Evidence that it has no effect	No

In detail:

Claims for the treatment	<p>Claims to remove ear wax, which may be the cause of tinnitus.</p> <p>Other claims for ear candling include treatment of sinusitis, vertigo, glue ear and reducing stress.</p>
What is the treatment?	A hollow tube of fabric that has been wound into a cone shape and soaked in wax is inserted into the ear and lit. This is left alight for several minutes before being removed.
What are the downsides of this treatment?	Burns to the face, ear canal or ear drum; injury to ear canal or ear drum; plugging of ears by candle wax; hearing loss ¹ .
Has there been research into this treatment?	Yes.

Tinnitus UK try very hard to make sure our information is right, but this information should not be taken as medical advice. You should always check with your doctor before trying any tinnitus treatment.

What does the research say?	'...its mode of action is implausible and demonstrably wrong. There are no data to suggest that it is effective for any condition. Furthermore, ear candles have been associated with ear injuries. The inescapable conclusion is that ear candles do more harm than good. Their use should be discouraged.' ²
How high quality is the research?*	D/E
Tinnitus UK's opinion on this treatment:	Ear candling is unsafe and to be avoided.
Would Tinnitus UK support further studies into this treatment?	No.
Comments	Also known as Hopi ear candles, ear cones and auricular candles.

* A = Systematic review/meta analysis. B = Randomised control studies. C = Cohort studies. D = Case control studies. E = case studies/reports. +/- to be used to indicate quality within bands

For further information

The Tinnitus UK Tinnitus Support Team can answer your questions on any tinnitus related topics:

Telephone **0800 018 0527**
 Web chat **tinnitus.org.uk**
 Email **helpline@tinnitus.org.uk**
 Text/SMS **07537 416841**

We also offer a free tinnitus e-learning programme, Take on Tinnitus at **takeontinnitus.co.uk**

References

1. Rafferty J, Tsikoudas A, Davis BC. Ear candling: should general practitioners recommend it? *Canadian Family Physician*. (2007);53(12):2121-2122.

2. Ernst, E. Ear candles: a triumph of ignorance over science. *The Journal of Laryngology and Otology*. (2004) Jan; 118(10): 1-2

Feedback

We welcome feedback on all our information.

You can pass your comments to our Communications Team by calling us on **0114 250 9933**, emailing **communications@tinnitus.org.uk** or by writing to us at the address overleaf.

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