



Stanford
MEDICINE

Ear Institute

Otolaryngology–Head & Neck Surgery

What You Need for Ear Flushes



Rubber Bulb Ear Syringe



Container for Mixing Ear Flush Solution

+



70% Isopropyl Alcohol
("Rubbing Alcohol")

+



Boric Acid

or



White Vinegar

Why Ear Flushing

The alcohol dries the ear, which can help it heal.

The solution acidifies the ear, killing bacteria and fungi that can cause ear infections.

The flushing rinses away debris that can collect and cause recurrent infections.

How to Prepare Ear Flush Solution

For rubbing alcohol-white vinegar: *Mix 50-50*

For rubbing alcohol – boric acid: *Teaspoon in powder while stirring until no more goes into solution*

How to Flush Your Ear

Warm the solution to body temperature, and fill the bulb syringe. 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. 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 twice 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 Strings 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.

If it is too uncomfortable to continue, alcohol based flushing may not be the best choice for your ear. Please discuss alternatives with your health care provider.

If Flushing makes you Dizzy

Warming the solution to body temperature before use will help reduce dizziness. You can place the container in warm water before using. Because alcohol is flammable, do not heat on a stove or microwave!

If your outer ear becomes dry or chapped

Use some baby oil or Vaseline on the dry areas after flushing