



Headphone test



Ear Drops



Tuning fork



Sound waves



Hearing aid



Listening




Aural Audio

HOW WE CAN HELP YOUR PATIENTS WITH 'BLOCKED' EARS

We are here to help your patients in many different ways...

Your patients may complain of 'blocked' or 'clogged' ears. They may also report muffled hearing, pain or earaches, tinnitus or even dizziness. Especially when providing virtual appointments, it may be difficult to determine if their symptoms are due to earwax impaction, middle ear pathology, or sensorineural hearing loss, among other conditions or disorders. **Audiologists are here to help!** We can provide a full audiological assessment to help you diagnose the cause of the problem.

- 'Blocked' ears may be caused by earwax. Many Audiologists utilize videoscopes to allow patients to see the insides of their ear canals. Patients are able to see their earwax (or absence of). If cerumen is present, Audiologists can remove it using various techniques. One recent technology is the Earigator™, which combines the functions of an otoscope and irrigation into one. Full temperature and pressure control allow Audiologists to safely and comfortably clean out even the most stubborn earwax.
 
- 'Blocked' ears may be caused by middle ear fluid. Otoscopy and tympanometry can detect ear fluid by visualizing changes to the tympanic membrane (e.g. bulging, retracted) or middle ear space (e.g. fluid, air bubbles) and by measuring the movement of the eardrum.
- Ear infection/Acute Otitis Media occurs when germs (bacteria and/or viruses) enter the middle ear and cause fever, ear pain, and active inflammation. Otitis media with effusion (OME) occurs when there is thick or sticky fluid behind the eardrum in the middle ear, without an infection.
- OME is most common in winter or early spring, but it can occur at any time of year. Though it can affect people of any age, it occurs most often in children, for several reasons:
 - The tube is shorter, more horizontal, and straighter, making it easier for bacteria to enter;
 - The tube is floppier, with a tinier opening that's easy to block;
 - Young children get more colds because it takes time for the immune system to be able to recognize and ward off cold viruses.
- 'Blocked' ears may be caused by sensorineural hearing loss (SNHL). Although it is most often gradual (e.g. presbycusis - due to aging), it may be sudden (SSNHL). If your patient reports a sudden drop in hearing, prompt and accurate diagnosis is required. Sensorineural hearing loss should be distinguished clinically from conductive hearing loss. **Immediate referral to an Audiologist is warranted.**
- Since SSNHL is often misdiagnosed as an earwax (when otoscopy is not performed) or an ear infection, proper evaluation and treatment are often delayed. "Prompt recognition and management of SSNHL may improve hearing recovery and patient quality of life."

Please consider referring your patients to us for hearing assessments.

References: <https://www.american-hearing.org/disease/common-ear-and-hearing-issues> <https://www.nidcd.nih.gov/health/sudden-deafness>

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WHO WE ARE

OAPAC is a group of independent audiologists who own and manage audiology clinics throughout the province of Ontario.

WHAT WE DO

- Audiologists are leaders in hearing health and auditory disorders.
- Audiologists have either a Masters or Doctorate degree in Audiology.
- Audiologists must use evidence-based practice principles and follow best practices. **Your patients will be met with safe, quality, ethical care that meets professional standards and guidelines.**
- Audiologists assess, identify, and manage all individuals – adults and children – with peripheral or central hearing loss, tinnitus, hyperacusis and balance disorders.
- Audiologists select, prescribe, fit and dispense hearing aids and other assistive listening devices. **Reminder: Hearing aids cannot be dispensed without a prescription!**
- Audiologists provide advanced testing which may include: Speech-In-Noise testing, Auditory Processing testing, Electrophysiological tests (e.g. ABR, OAEs), cognitive screenings, vestibular assessments.
- Wax removal using various techniques which may include irrigation, suction, curettes.

Find an OAPAC clinic near you at: oapac.ca