

Community Ear Wax Management Service

Ear wax is a natural body product which protects the ear from dirt, bacteria, fungi and water.
It does not usually need to be removed.

Wax Management Pathway Inclusion criteria

Clinically confirmed ear drum occluded with wax
 Patient over 18 yrs. with symptoms of:
Blocked Ear
Discomfort / Earache
Hearing loss
Tinnitus
 (NB - minimal wax is unlikely to cause the symptoms listed above)
 Other potential sinister cause ruled out and no patient reported exclusions
 ** Patients without symptoms should be provided with information on self-management

Exclusions for self-management (to be seen by GP):

Sudden onset or rapid worsening of hearing (NICE Guidance NG98)
 Patients with significant pain and/or discharge from ear
 Patients with known outer or middle ear conditions (e.g. ear drum perforation)
 Previous ear surgery
 Children/young person under 18 years of age
 Pulsatile tinnitus
 Otolgia / Referred Pain

Patient self refers, or is referred by a HCP, screened for contraindications, initially by hub & then by registrant

Contraindications Present

Self-reported resolution

Self-management
 Give patient education/information
 7 days of olive oil drops

Persistent symptoms after 1 week of self-management

Wax Management Service

Patient seen by competent practitioner for initial assessment and consent. For referral back to GP if any contraindications. If none present on assessment, then competent practitioner to proceed with additional wax removal by micro suction (*maximum of 2 appointments*)

Audiology referral route
 Patient assessed by audiology team and risk factors excluded

All problems resolved:
 ✓ Wax cleared
 ✓ Symptoms resolved
 ✓ Ear canal and tympanic membrane normal
Discharge with:
 Symptom guidance
 Self-management advice

Persistent Issues

Wax clear and normal drum but persistent hearing loss/tinnitus, Patient **already has** NHS hearing aids from HDUHB

Wax clear and normal drum but persistent hearing loss/tinnitus: Patient **does not have** NHS hearing aids

Any of the following:
 Wax still present
 Abnormal drum
 Symptomatic
 Patient unable to tolerate procedure, tremor

Patient advised to contact local Audiology Department to arrange appointment

RN refers to audiology

Refer back to GP / remain with GP for assessment/management and treatment

GP unable to manage ear condition?

ENT Secondary Care
 Patient to be referred to ENT for further investigation and treatment

Advice/signposting available from

Patient Information Leaflets
 "Choose well" at local pharmacies
 NHS online [Get medical help - NHS 111](#)
 Public health information includes advice NOT to use cotton buds or similar in ear

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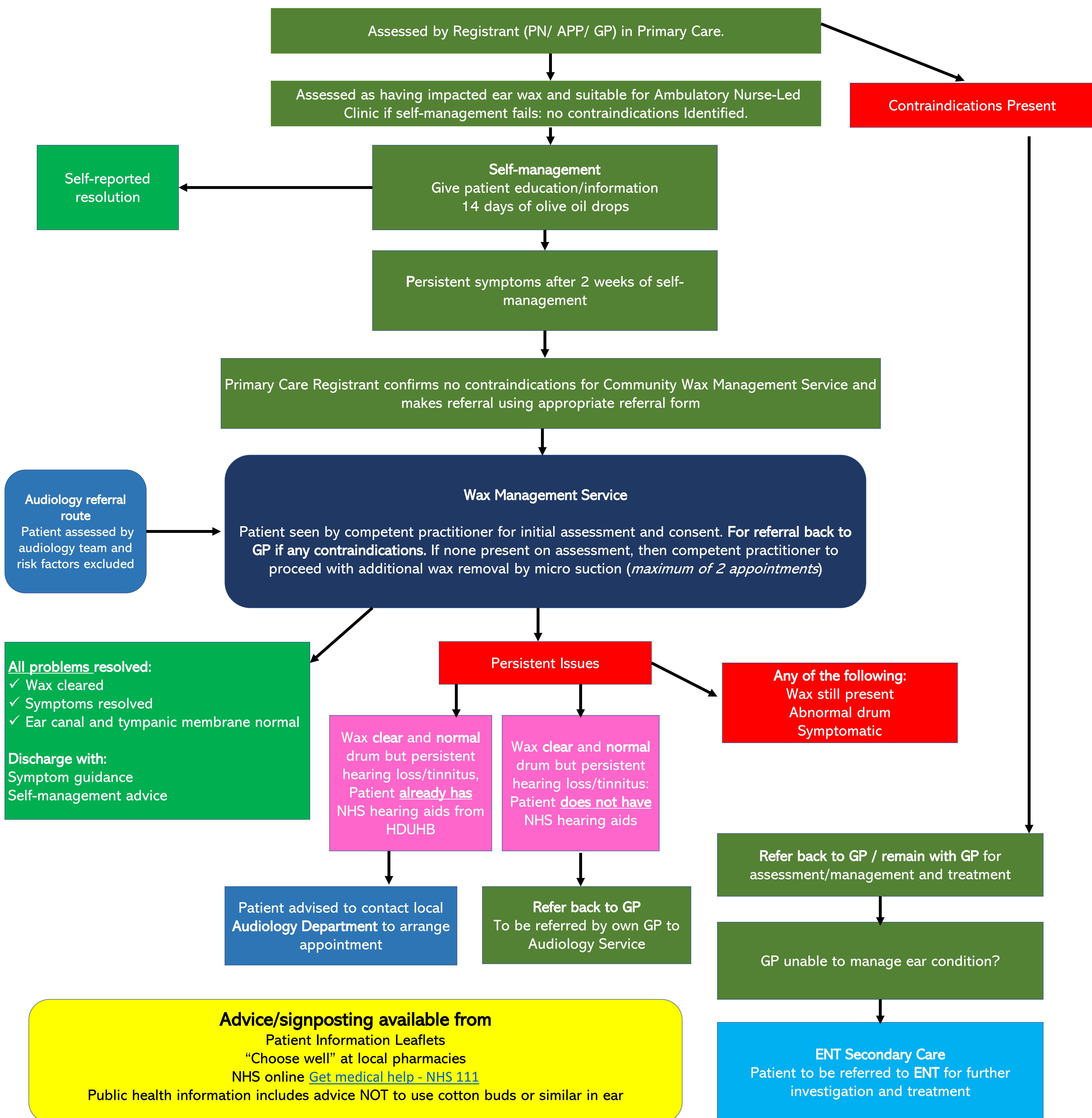
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