

World Leaders In Innovative Earcare

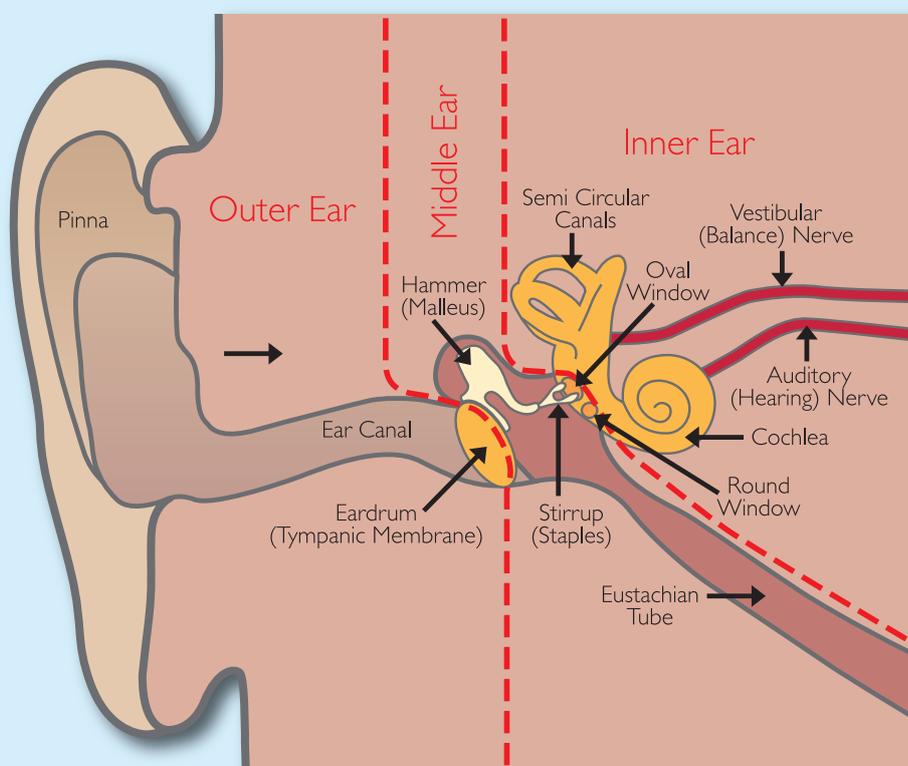
In-flight earcare

Helping to minimise ear discomfort, whether you're a frequent flyer or occasional holidaymaker

Generally, the likelihood of discomfort is greater as the plane descends to land. Problems can include a throbbing pain in the middle ear, a dullness of hearing or a feeling of 'fullness' in the ear canal.

All are due to having difficulty moving air through the Eustachian tubes (see diagram below). They can be worse if you are already suffering from a cold.

The Ear



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Discomfort can be minimised by

Swallowing

When you swallow, air can pass more easily through the Eustachian tubes. This can be helped by chewing gum or sucking boiled sweets, which are sometimes available from flight crew.

Yawning

Yawning is a very good way of opening the Eustachian tubes, but in doing this repeatedly can be difficult. Alternating between yawning and swallowing may be easier.

If you find that this isn't helping much,

you could try blowing through your nose with the nostrils pinched closed - this forces air along the Eustachian tube, enabling equal pressure.

Pressure regulating earplugs, silicone earplugs (adult & child sizes) alleviate the symptoms using a patented ceramic filter which slowly allow ears to become accustomed to the difference in pressure.
Available at pharmacies and supermarkets.

Babies and young children can be particularly affected by ear discomfort during decent. Keeping a drink handy is a good way to get them to swallow.

If you are congested with a cold, there are over-the-counter nasal sprays

available which can help to clear the nose and these can be used about an hour before decent. They should be used sparingly though, as repeated use over many days can actually cause the nose to become more congested. Your pharmacist can advise you about specific brands.

Hearing Aids

If you use a hearing aid, it should work normally on the aeroplane. However the increased background noise may cause discomfort depending on the type of aid you have. It may be more restful to switch the aid off, through if you do it is advisable to inform the flight crew.

Glue Ear

If your child suffers from glue ear, you should check with their GP to see if there is any reason why they should not fly. If there isn't, most children may find that their hearing improves on ascend. On decent they should follow the guidelines in this leaflet.

Grommets

If your child has a grommet inserted, and as long as it has not become blocked, they should not experience any discomfort. This is because the ventilation enables pressure changes to occur.

Deafness Research UK Information Service

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