



Relieving the pressure of holiday ear agony

There's a buzz of excitement in the air as millions of families are preparing to jet off on their summer holidays. According to the most recent government statistics, UK residents made over 55 million visits abroad in 2011 with Spain and France being the most popular countries accounting for 34% of all visits abroad. With last year's unusually wet summer still fresh in British minds, it is likely that even more families will choose to chase the sun this summer.

Unfortunately though within just a few hours of the great escape, holiday excitement can turn to agony and despair with plane loads of passengers enduring the excruciating pain of pressure build up in the ears. Even if you are lucky enough to be spared the pain, a family summer holiday flight is often a stressful ordeal with screaming babies and children and harassed parents trying everything to comfort and calm them.

It is the dramatic changes in air pressure during flying, particularly when the airplane is landing, going from low atmospheric pressure down closer to earth where the air pressure is higher, that can cause eardrum pain and in some cases eardrum perforation, vertigo, and even hearing loss. A recent study found that 20% of adult and as many as 40% of child passengers had negative pressure in the middle ear after a flight, and that 10% of adults and 22% of children had evidence of damage to the eardrum.

Equalising the pressure in the ears helps to ease the discomfort and pain. Normally, yawning or swallowing does the trick and causes a popping sound in the ear by pushing a small bubble of air up from the back of the nose, through the Eustachian tube and into the middle ear, helping to keep the air pressure on both sides of the eardrum equal.

However, the Eustachian tube can be blocked so the air in the tube is already absorbed causing a vacuum, sucking the eardrum inward and stretching it, resulting in excruciating pain and muffled sounds as it cannot vibrate naturally. If the tube remains blocked, fluid can seep into the area from surrounding membranes to try to overcome the vacuum, causing 'fluid in the ear', which can lead to a hole in the eardrum, hearing loss and dizziness.



Flying with a cold, sinus infection or nasal allergies can make ear pain more likely as the Eustachian tube may be already blocked. Chewing gum or sucking on hard sweets can help equalise the pressure and many experienced air travellers use a decongestant pill or nasal spray an hour or so before descent. EarPlanes®, the world's first pressure regulating earplug, contains an exclusive CeramX™ filter which is able to regulate air pressure naturally, providing

relief from ear pain, popping and discomfort during flying. They are made of hypoallergenic and latex free soft silicone and come in an adult and children's size so all the family can sit back and enjoy the flight.

Having arrived in sunnier climes worn and weary all anyone wants is a good night's sleep to feel fresh and ready for the holiday ahead. Yet, more irritating ear problems often await in the guise of noisy, snoring or rowdy neighbours and in some cases building work that often starts at dawn!

In a survey by the British Snoring and Sleep Apnoea Association, 54% of people have had their holidays adversely affected by snoring and 20% have been banished to the bathroom because of the noise. Soft Foam Earplugs, have an extensive range of earplugs for children ages one to ten as well as adults in a variety of colours and able to block out different levels of sound to silence the noisiest of snorers, nightclubs or road drills and ensure the whole family gets a proper night's sleep.

For many families, soaking up the sun and spending hours playing and swimming in the sea or pool is the perfect way to spend the day on holiday. That is, until a throbbing ear ache begins to take hold and the pain then totally ruins the holiday.

Swimmer's ear, or otitis externa, is a common problem that can cause pain and discomfort for children and swimmers of all ages. In the United States, swimmer's ear results in an estimated 2.4 million health care visits every year and nearly half a billion dollars in health care costs. Swimmer's ear can occur when water stays in the ear canal for long periods of time, providing the perfect environment for germs to grow and infect the skin. Germs found in pools are one of the most common causes of swimmer's ear.

Water clears ear wax out of the external ear canal - the tube between the outer ear and eardrum which causes itchiness inside the ear. If you try to scratch inside the ear, the sensitive skin of the canal can break down allowing an infection. This then causes redness and swelling, intense pain when the infected ear is tugged or when pressure is placed on the ear and also pus can drain from the infected ear. There can sometimes be a degree of temporary hearing loss.

Swimmer's ear can be treated with antibiotic ear drops but the best cure for infections caused by



water in the ear canal is to keep the moisture from infiltrating in the first place. BioEars™, the world's first anti-microbial earplug, forms an effective barrier to protect swimmers from water seeping into the ears and causing painful outer ear infections. ClearEars™, an innovative water absorbing earplug which quickly and effectively removes water from the ears, is also an ideal way to prevent preventing stagnant water and germs from causing ear problems.

Plugging the ears is the perfect way to prevent ear pain from pressure build-up, infection from swimmer's ear and any noisy neighbours or partners from disturbing the peace on a long-awaited relaxing holiday.

About Cirrus Healthcare

Cirrus Healthcare Products is the world leader in innovative ear care. The company's main product portfolio centres on a pioneering range of unique earplugs which are specially designed to alleviate the symptoms of many common ear complaints.

The range includes:

- EarPlanes®, the world's first pressure regulating earplug
- BioEars™, the world's first anti-microbial earplug
- ClearEars™, the world's first water removal earplug
- Soft Foam Earplugs, in an extensive range of colours and sound attenuation ranges

References:

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<http://www.bbc.co.uk/science/humanbody/sleep/articles/sleepdisorders.shtml>

<http://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/rwi/illnesses/swimmers-ear.html>

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