

Using cotton buds could damage your hearing

Harder

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Doctors are now telling us what grandparents have known for decades - don't stick anything smaller than your elbow into your ears. An organization of ear specialists in the USA, the American Academy of Otolaryngology, has said cleaning your ears with cotton buds (aka Q-tips) can cause long-lasting damage to your eardrums and hearing. Dr. Jennifer Caudle told Yahoo Beauty that cotton buds seem harmless objects but can cause significant damage. She said: "I know people want to stick things in their ears and they think it's the right thing to do, but [cotton buds] can cause holes in the eardrum, irritation in the canal, and can predispose you to getting infections."

The Academy has also recommended that people change their image of earwax and think of it as an essential substance to keep our ears healthy. Dr. Seth Schwartz said: "There is an inclination for people to want to clean their ears because they believe earwax is an indication of uncleanliness. This misinformation leads to unsafe ear health habits." Doctors say our body produces earwax for a good reason. It does an essential job of cleaning out the ears, stopping them from drying out, and helping them to sweat naturally. It also protects the inner ears against bacteria, bugs, dirt and dust. Using cotton buds can push earwax further inside the ear and cause blockages, which can undo all the good work of earwax.

Sources: Yahoo.com / gizmodo.com / sciencealert.com



Discussion Questions

1. How important is our sense of hearing?
2. What should we do to look after our ears?
3. Why do people think earwax is a sign of uncleanliness?
4. What other misinformation do companies of health products give?
5. Will you now change your ear-cleaning habits?

**SPEAK
YOUR
MIND**

EAR DANGERS

Rank these with your teacher.

Put the biggest dangers to ears at the top.

- cotton buds
- headphones
- insects
- bacteria
- rock concerts
- city noise
- swimming
- ear piercings