

SECTION: NURSING SERVICES

POLICY #: 410 EAR IRRIGATION

POLICY: Central Valley Health District conducts ear irrigation to remove excess cerumen from the ear canal.

PROCEDURE:

1. Examine the ear canal with an otoscope.
2. Explain the procedure to the client and advise the client not to make any sudden moves to avoid trauma from the instruments.
3. Check the water temperature of the irrigating solution for body temperature.
4. Place towel around neck and over shoulder of client.
5. Tip the client's head to the side and ask client to hold the collection basin.
6. Fill the syringe and expel air.
7. The tip of the irrigating device should be placed just inside the external meatus so that the tip is visible. (A new pliable tip will be used with each ear irrigation.)
8. Strengthen the external auditory meatus by gently drawing the penna up and back in an adult. For an infant, gently pull the penna down and back.
9. Direct fluid towards the posterior wall of the canal. Flow is to be steady.
10. Stop the irrigation immediately, if the client complains of pain, nausea or vertigo.
11. Examine the ear canal periodically throughout the irrigation process.
12. (A disposable ear curvette will be used to remove any loose wax near the exterior of the canal. The curvette will be disposed of upon completion of the irrigation procedure)
13. If cerumen is not removed satisfactorily after a reasonable amount of time, at the nurses discretion, encourage client to use a wax softening agent and return to office in 2-3 days to re-irrigate the ear.
14. Documentation of cerumen removal procedure in client's chart.
15. Refer any abnormalities to family physician.