

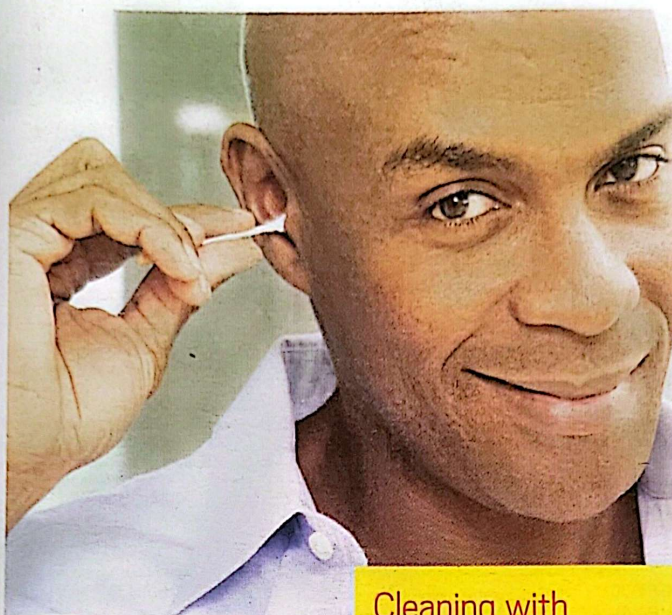
...powder on the
area. It helps relieve minor skin
irritation and itching by neutralizing toxins on
your skin.
• It will also help in removing bacteria and
odours as it prevents fungus that may lead

Drink the solution one hour after eating.
• Consuming baking soda will rid the
body of acids since it contains alkaline.
Baking soda buffers acids in the body
which helps to keep the pH levels
balanced.
By Phloresh Nassanga



That cotton swab could harm you

We are accustomed to using cotton swabs to clean our ears and get rid of that uncomfortable itch. However, cotton swabs can cause you more damage than anticipated. **Dorcus Murungi** explores how.



Do we really have to clean our ears?

The answer is: yes and no. The outer ear or pinna benefits from a good cleaning every now and then. This can be accomplished with a little soap, water and a washcloth while you shower.

In most cases, the ear canal does not need to be cleaned. During hair washing or showers, enough water enters the ear canal to loosen the wax that has accumulated. Additionally, the skin in your ear canal naturally grows in an outward, spiral pattern. As it sloughs off, ear wax goes with it. Most of the time the wax will loosen and fall out on its own while you are asleep. The need for a cotton swab isn't necessary.

www.healthyhearing.com

sists in cleaning and lubrication while also providing protection from bacteria, fungi, insects and water. The absence of ear wax results in dry, itchy ears that are prone to infection," he says.

He further explains that ears are self-cleaning and no one is supposed to tamper with them.

"A small amount of wax accumulates, dries out and falls out of the ear canal, ridding the ear of unwanted dust or sand particles," he explains.

Dr Richard Asaba of Hoima Regional Referral Hospital says cleaning the ears brings irritations to the skin and can lead to further damage in the inner skin if the object used extends deeper.

"In the process of cleaning the ears, the delicate underlying skin of the ear becomes

more susceptible to infection," he observes.

In case of build-up

According to Dr Sabrina Kitaka of Mulago Hospital, pushing ear buds into the ears may seem harmless but it may damage the ear drum in the long run.

"No one is supposed to place anything inside the ear to remove dirt. You can always clean the outer ears gently with water and cotton," she advises.

Dr Kitaka, however, notes that though ears are self-cleaning, there are some incidents when wax build-up affects the hearing of an individual. She says this causes pain, ringing in the ear, a foul odour or dizziness.

She advises those affected to always consult an ENT specialist to treat those effects.

Cleaning with hydrogen peroxide

According to Dr Biso, when too much wax accumulates in the ears, hydrogen peroxide is useful to soften and easily remove the wax. He says this softening agent is a good home remedy that can clean the ears. This can be done at home but with guidance from a doctor. He recommends the following:

- Lie head down on a pillow and keep the head level and the ears facing the ceiling. This position is important for the hydrogen peroxide drops to come in contact with the earwax.
- Use an eyedropper and place three to four drops of hydrogen peroxide into the ear. Keep the head down on the pillow with the ear directed to the ceiling, for at least five minutes.
- Sit up and use a soft cotton ball to mark any liquid from the outer ear. Wax will not come out right away but the hydrogen peroxide will be working to soften the earwax, so it will gradually come out on its own.
- Repeat the process for several days until the wax gets cleared.

Damali Namubiru, 25, would always use cotton swabs to clean her ears. She says that everytime after cleaning she would feel relieved.

However, within a short time, when the 'cleaning' became a habit, she noticed an irritation in her ears. This, she says, necessitated her to visit a medical expert.

"I noticed that my sense of hearing was fading. I had a constant buzzing sound in the ears. So, I went to see an Ear Nose and Throat (ENT) specialist who after examination cautioned me against the use of cotton swabs," she explains.

Ear wax useful

Dr Fred Biso, the President of Uganda Medical consultant for ENT specialist cautions against using cotton swabs to clean ears. To him, ear wax is useful.

"Earwax protects the skin of the human ear canal and as-



Call to ACTION!!!!

DO YOU KNOW.....

1 in 4 teenagers aged 15-19 are already pregnant or having their first child. 15 - 23% of female youth between 15 - 24 have had an abortion greatly increasing the risk of disability and death for pregnant adolescents. (Sociology Journal "Factors associated with adolescent pregnancy and fertility in Uganda: Analysis of the 2011 Demographic and Health Survey data)

54% of teenagers aged 15-19 do not know a girl can get pregnant the first time she has sex. When women and girls stay longer in education and earn an income, the chain of poverty is broken-down (United Nations

Foundation report 2012). The Budget calendar process opens in August and it's an opportunity for you to influence and En-Youth the budget.

Take part by attending your village priority meetings and demand for increased financial support towards teenage friendly sexual reproductive health facilities.

Take part by informing your parish leadership to involve the citizens in the development of the parish plan for the Financial Year 2018/19 once the Budget Call is made

It Starts at the PARISH. It begins with you.

This message is brought to you by
Uganda Youth Network. "For Us, With Us, By Us"

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