

# PARTS OF THE EAR

## OUTER EAR

The outer ear consists of the pinna and the ear canal. The pinna is the part outside; it is a shell shaped structure made of cartilage. This part of the ear conducts sound waves into the ear

## THE MIDDLE EAR

Sound waves travel through the middle ear

## THE INNER EAR

Special cells cover the sound signals, which then travel along nerves to the brain

The inner ear is a delicate part of the ear, with fluid filled 'canals'. It houses sensory cells and nerve endings that aid normal hearing

# HOW THE EAR WORKS

The pinna funnels sound waves towards the eardrum. When we hear sound, the eardrum (tympanic membrane) vibrates in response to changes in air pressure

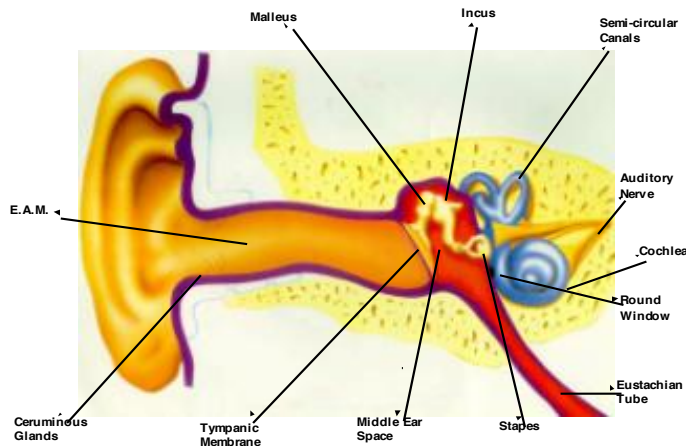
The middle ear is a small cavity between the eardrum and the inner ear

The snail like inner ear contains a maze of fluid filled passages. This part of the ear deals with the reception and analysis of sound. It also keeps the body balanced

# DID YOU KNOW THAT?

- ▶ The ear consists of three parts: the outer middle and inner ear
- ▶ The ear acts as a sophisticated sound system
- ▶ Our ears play an important role in maintaining our sense of balance, co-ordinating our head, eye and body movements
- ▶ The complex folds that form the outer ear not only act as an amplifier, but also as a shield to stop objects, such as insects, entering the ear
- ▶ The outer ear is made of cartilage, which is a dense connective tissue; it is flexible and supportive
- ▶ In the UK, five million people could improve their hearing, if they wore hearing aids

Anatomy of the Ear



## ADVICE FOR PEOPLE WITH EAR PROBLEMS

- ◆ Keep your ear canals dry when washing your hair, showering or swimming. This can be done by using ear plugs or cotton wool covered in Vaseline. Before going swimming, check with your doctor or nurse that swimming will not harm your ears
- ◆ Ear canals have a self-cleaning mechanism so please do not use cotton buds, hairgrips, matches etc. to clean or dry your ears. These damage the delicate lining of your ear canal and may even perforate your eardrum
- ◆ Do not scratch your ears as this may spread infection. If they are itchy, consult your nurse
- ◆ If you suffer from excessive wax, use of olive oil can help the ear clean itself. For details, please see your nurse or doctor
- ◆ If you are to have your ears irrigated (syringed) to remove excess wax, you must inform the nurse before she starts if you have a perforated eardrum
- ◆ If your symptoms do not improve with treatment, or if they get worse, consult your nurse or doctor
- ◆ If you have problem ears keep your ears dry

For further help/advice, please contact:-

The Primary Ear Care Centre  
Community Health Centre (NHS Rotherham)  
Greasbrough Road  
ROTHERHAM S60 1RY

Tel No: 01709 423207

Website: [www.earcarecentre.com](http://www.earcarecentre.com)

## USEFUL CONTACTS

### ROYAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR DEAF PEOPLE (RNID)

19-23 Featherstone Street, LONDON EC1Y 8SL  
Telephone: 0808 808 0123  
Text phone: 0808 808 9000  
Website: [www.rnid.org.uk](http://www.rnid.org.uk)

### THE BRITISH DEAF ASSOCIATION

1-3 Worship Street, LONDON EC2A 2AB  
Telephone: 0870 770 3300  
Text phone: 0800 652 2965  
Videophone: 020 7496 9539  
Website: [www.bda.org.uk](http://www.bda.org.uk)

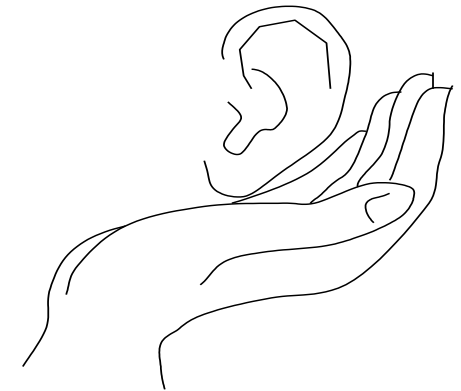
### HEARING CONCERN

4<sup>th</sup> Floor 275-281 King Street, LONDON W6 9LZ  
Voice phone: 0845 074 4600  
Fax and Text: 020 8233 2934  
Website: [www.hearingconcern.org.uk](http://www.hearingconcern.org.uk)

### BRITISH TINNITUS ASSOCIATION

Ground Floor, Unit5, Acorn Business Park,  
Woodseats Close, SHEFFIELD S8 0TB  
Free phone: 0800 018 0527  
Telephone: 0114 250 9922  
Fax No: 0114 258 7059  
Website: [www.tinnitus.org.uk](http://www.tinnitus.org.uk)

# THE EAR



**We're here because  
HEARING is precious**