Irrigating your ear with one of these two drying solutions once or twice a day helps to remove moisture and debris and dries the ear. Buy a 10cc syringe at your local drugstore. The irrigation solution must be body temperature. If the solution is too warm or too cold, you will feel dizzy. Warm the solution by placing the syringe with the tip up in a cup of hot water. Do not warm the solution in the stove or in a microwave.

Lie down with the ear to be rinsed facing up and place a towel around the ear to protect the eyes. Pull up and out on the external ear. Place the tip of the syringe into the ear canal and irrigate gently. Use at least 10cc’s. Turn over and let the solution run out of your ear. After irrigation, dry directly down the ear canal with a hair dryer on low heat for five minutes. Avoid high heat, as this will cause dizziness.

The irrigations may sting initially but this should significantly diminish with subsequent irrigations. For the first few times, you may take Tylenol or anti-inflammatory a half hour before irrigating.

Instructions for Ear Irrigation
Most outer ear infections are caused or worsened significantly by moisture accumulating in the ear canal. This can occur in patients with skin problems of the ear canal, in people that wear hearing aids or after surgery. Drying the ear on a regular basis helps resolve the problem and is often all that is required. Use of antibiotics and antibiotic ear drops can frequently be avoided.

Vinegar and Water Solution
Buy white table vinegar. Mix a 50/50 solution of vinegar and water into a clean jar (equal parts vinegar and water). Draw up the solution into the syringe and warm as above. Cover the jar and store at room temperature.

Boric Acid and Alcohol Solution
Buy 1 quart of rubbing alcohol (isopropyl alcohol) and 1 box or jar of boric acid crystals or powder. Pour the alcohol into a clean jar. Add the boric acid powder to the alcohol, a small amount at a time and stir until dissolved. Repeat until no more boric acid will dissolve. Filter the solution through a paper coffee filter into a second jar. Some settling may occur-shake well before each use. Draw up the solution into the syringe and warm as above. Cover the jar and store at room temperature. If this is too troublesome, a prescription for this solution can be obtained and made by the pharmacist.

Head & Neck Department / San Jose

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