

## Ear Candling – Does It Really Clean Ears?



*This shows material that appears after ear candling, sometimes alleged to be earwax and toxins. It is actually residue from the candle itself.*

### At-A-Glance

- sometimes called ear cones
- the claim is that the ‘candle’ sucks the wax out of the ear
- no, they do not work
- keep fire away from your ears and head

### What Are Ear Candles?

Also known as an ear cone, an ear candle is a thin, hollow tube of linen or muslin cloth, soaked in paraffin or beeswax and tapered at one end. Some are scented with herbs, honey, or aromatherapy oils.

### What Do Ear Candles Claim To Do?

One end of the hollow candle is lit and the other is placed in the ear canal. The basic claim is that the heat from the flame melts and loosens the ear wax and creates negative pressure that ‘sucks’ the wax into the candle. This is referred to as the ‘chimney effect’.

### Do Ear Candles Work?

No, they do not work. They do not remove earwax (cerumen) or toxicants, and they can be dangerous, especially when used on children.

### What Does The FDA say?

In 2007, the Food and Drug Administration issued an alert identifying ear candles (also known as ear cones or auricular candles) as “dangerous to health when used in the dosage or manner, or with the frequency or duration, prescribed, recommended, or suggested in the labeling thereof...since the use of a lit candle in the proximity of a person’s face would carry a high risk of causing potentially severe skin/hair burns and middle ear damage”.

**A 2007 Paper in *American Family Physician* said:**

Ear candling is a practice in which a hollow candle is inserted into the external auditory canal and lit, with the patient lying on the opposite ear. In theory, the combination of heat and suction is supposed to remove earwax. However, in one trial, ear candles neither created suction nor removed wax and actually led to occlusion with candle wax in persons who previously had clean ear canals. Primary care physicians may see complications from ear candling including candle wax occlusion, local burns, and tympanic membrane perforation.

From Drs. Gary Harris and Bethany Porter, Audiologists with The HEARING Place - *we know hearing, we know hearing aids.*