

**THE DANGERS OF  
 EAR CANDLING**

*Terry R. DeGroot, MD*

“Ear candling,” also known as auricular candling or coning, refers to various procedures that involve placing a cone-shaped device in the ear canal and supposedly extracting earwax and other impurities with the help of smoke or burning wick. The origins of candling are obscure. Ancient Tibet, China, Egypt, the pre-Columbian Americas, and even the mythical city of Atlantis are cited as possible contributors. The procedures supposedly create a low-level vacuum that draws wax and other debris out of the ear canal. Some proponents even claim that impurities are removed from the inner ear, the facial sinuses, or even the brain itself, all of which are somehow connected to the canal.

Most ear candles manufactured in the United States and Canada are made of linen or cotton soaked in paraffin or bees wax.

During the procedure itself, the person lies on their side. A “collecting” plate is placed above the ear and the cone/candle is placed through a hole in the plate and the tip is inserted into the ear canal. The candle is then ignited. After the procedure, the cone may be opened and any visible debris is identified as earwax, toxins, dead skin, drug residues or remnants of past yeast infections.

Candles are classified by the FDA as medical devices. As



such, they are illegal to market without FDA approval, which none of them have. Ear candles cannot be sold legally anywhere in Canada. In order to skirt these regulations, candles tend to be labeled “for entertainment” use.

The “scientific” claims made by candle manufacturers have been evaluated on multiple occasions by various agencies and academic institutions. Examination of the ear canals has shown no reduction in earwax following candling. Engineers have found no measurable vacuum within the devices. Chemists have analyzed the debris residual in the used candle as products of combustion such as burned paraffin and ashes with no evidence of earwax present.

Multiple injuries involving the face and ears have been reported in medical journals, including burns, perforated ear drums and hearing loss.

In summary, ear candling/coning has been proven to be both ineffective and dangerous.

**If you have a client with an ear wax problem, Dr. DeGroot is available at all 3 locations of Comprehensive Ear & Hearing for cerumen management.**





Terry DeGroot, M.D.

Dr. Terry DeGroot is available at all three Comprehensive Ear & Hearing locations for medical ear & hearing care including cerumen management.

If you have a patient with any of the following symptoms an appointment with Dr. DeGroot is recommended:

- Sudden hearing loss or noticeable change in hearing
- Ringing in the ears
- Ear pain or pressure
- History of ear wax accumulation

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