

## Overview

This standard covers examination of the individual's external ear only. It does not include further treatment that might be recommended following examination of the ear. The examination could be carried out in a variety of care settings, including hospitals – both for in and out patients, GP surgeries, nursing and residential homes, and in the individuals own home.

Users of this standard will need to communicate effectively to meet individuals' needs and wishes and work in line with health and safety legislation, policy and practices.

## Performance criteria

### *You must be able to:*

- P1. identify and agree the roles and responsibilities of yourself and others in undertaking examination of the external ear
- P2. provide support to the individual, ensuring that you respect their rights and wishes relating to their privacy, beliefs and dignity
- P3. apply standard infection control precautions and any other relevant health and safety measures
- P4. check the individual's identity and confirm the planned action
- P5. establish consent and access information on undertaking examination of the external ear
- P6. establish whether the individual has any current symptoms or concerns
- P7. collect the equipment and ensure that it is in good working order,
- P8. position the individual to enable easy and safe access to the ear for the examination
- P9. position yourself at the same level as the individual to be able to undertake the examination with the individual's safety and your comfort in mind.
- P10. hold the equipment in a correct manner to ensure complete safety and comfort for the individual and allow the best visual field for you
- P11. check the condition of the external ear and surrounding skin and note any abnormalities
- P12. choose the correct size speculum according to the size of the ear canal and attach it to the otoscope
- P13. hold the pinna in the correct way to straighten the external ear canal and insert the otoscope gently and safely to view the external ear, looking to detect signs of previous ear surgery, inflammation, lesion or any abnormalities
- P14. observe the ear canal and the tympanic membrane thoroughly without causing undue discomfort as possible and taking into account the size, shape, orientation and condition of the ear canal and the presence of wax or foreign bodies
- P15. remove the otoscope from the ear and remove the speculum and place ready for cleaning or disposal, ensuring the same speculum is not used for each ear of the individual where there is a risk of transferring an infection between the ears.
- P16. inform the individual about the examination process, findings and outcomes
- P17. dispose of waste in accordance with organisational procedures
- P18. note your findings and report to an appropriate member of staff for further action if

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required

P19. complete all relevant documentation records and reports required for undertaking examination of the external ear

## Knowledge and understanding

### *You need to know and understand:*

- K1. how to access and interpret all relevant work instructions, legislation, guidelines, policies, procedures and protocols needed to undertake examination of the external ear
- K2. the current legislation, guidelines, policies, procedures and protocols which are relevant to your work practice and to which you must adhere
- K3. the scope and limitations of your own competence, responsibilities and accountability as it applies to your job role
- K4. specific procedures for reporting issues which are beyond your competence, responsibilities and accountability
- K5. the principles, practice and procedures associated with informed consent
- K6. the needs of individuals including issues relating to dignity, confidentiality, and privacy
- K7. when it is necessary to abort the procedure at any stage if undue discomfort, pain, bleeding or related signs and symptoms occur during the examination and when it is necessary to seek immediate medical attention.
- K8. the importance of applying and adhering to standard infection control precautions when undertaking examination of the external ear and the potential consequences of poor practice
- K9. the anatomy of the ear (external, middle and inner)
- K10. why it is important to examine the external ear only
- K11. the signs and symptoms an individual may complain of which leads you and others to suspect a problem with the external ear
- K12. the types of hearing loss and how to improve communication with individuals who are hard of hearing
- K13. why you need to explain to the individual what you are doing
- K14. the purpose of an otoscope and how it works
- K15. what you would do if the otoscope does not function properly
- K16. how to clean all types of re-useable equipment
- K17. why it is important to position the individual and yourself correctly for the examination
- K18. the safe way to hold and use the equipment and why this is important
- K19. how to dispose of waste in accordance with organisational procedures
- K20. how to complete and safely store all relevant documentation in accordance with

organisational and professional body requirements

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**Suite** Clinical Health Skills

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