

Ear Candling

What Is It? What Can It Do? How Is It Done?

by Greg Webb

Ear candling is a process which has been around for hundreds of years, but has primarily, been either forgotten or replaced by the wonders of modern medical science. According to some sources, it originated with the Egyptians who used reeds. The Chinese as well as the Greeks also used this method for treating problems with the ears. Fortunately, with the tremendous resurgence in popularity in alternative medicine modalities such as herbology, iridology, naturopathy, massage, to name a few. Ear Candling has also experienced a rediscovery as a very helpful treatment technique for many health problems related to the ear and sinus area of the body.

A. Okay, but still you want to know what ear candling is!

The basis of the technique involves the use of a candle which looks very much like a large hollow straw about 10" long and 1/2" in diameter. It has a hollow cotton structure which is tapered on one end, is coated in wax leaving the top and bottom open. The person lies on their side with the tapered end resting gently, but snugly, in the ear canal. The top end of the candle is lit by a second person, as it slowly burns down, the heat created by the candle burning (since hot air rises) creates a very slight warm swirling current of air and a slight, relative vacuum. This pulls from the ear canal excess ear wax, toxins, remnants of past infections and candida yeast accumulations. It also seems to have a beneficial local clearing effect upon the lymphatic system. One of the wonderful things about the ear candling process is that with a bit of basic training and instruction, it can be done at home. Obviously, you should still consult your physician with matters of medical importance, however in this age where so many of us are taking an active role in maintaining our own health and becoming less reliant upon the medical system, ear candling provides a marvellous tool for us to have at our disposal.

B. Is the ear candling procedure one which you can perform on yourself?

NO! I highly advise against it. You are using an open flame, to do this on yourself, would only be inviting accidents. As well, an important part of the process, is to ensure that the candle is properly seated in the ear canal. This is very difficult to do by yourself.

C. What will you notice from having your ears candled?

This is something which varies from person to person depending upon what their individual ailment or curiosity is with the process. Some of the more common things that are noticed by clients without any specific problems are; a much more open feeling in the sinuses, air comes more freely through the breathing cavities, the central part of their head feels lighter and less congested, "a nice clear feeling" is what many people have described the feeling to be. It is also quite common for this "clearer" feeling to extend down the sides of the throat where the lymphatic ducts travel from. Sounds very pleasant doesn't it? Most would agree.

D. How many candles are done in a treatment?

The standard treatment I do on most adults is 2 candles in a row per ear. The first one gets things loosened up and flowing, the second makes more of a noticeable difference. If at the end of the second candle there is a large volume of wax or powder I encourage the person to continue candling at that time. For regular maintenance, 1 candle periodically (weekly or monthly) dependant upon individual needs is sufficient.

For preteens I suggest starting with just one candle per ear and see what the effect is. Get feedback from the child as to how it feels, and aim for a balanced feel from ear to ear. If in doubt consult your physician or a doctor who is familiar with ear candling. Ear candling is a very non-

invasive procedure, I have not heard of anyone being harmed by it when done properly.

For infants (under 6 years) it seems most practitioners like to start with 1/2 of a candle per ear. This process has helped relieve the pressure from ear infections for many people, a problem which seems to be very common in some children.

E. Testimonials from clients and practitioners!

Examples of people who have tried ear candling "just to see if it would help" are:

A woman from Calgary in her mid thirties had been bothered by very clogged achy sinuses for a number of years. When she would catch a cold she would be laid up in bed for several days and could count on being quite under the weather for up to 2 or 3 weeks. Her husband, whom I had trained to do ear candling about a month prior to her starting to catch her next cold, laid her down and treated each ear with 3 candles each 2 days in a row. This time, she completely recovered from her cold symptoms in 3 days and her sinuses, which were always achy and clogged, had cleared and were free of pressure for the first time in years. They continued the candling on a periodic basis every few weeks or so, for maintenance and were quite happy with the results.

One lady who attended a workshop had been bothered with ringing in the ear which had been fitted with a drainage tube. The one candle which we did in that ear helped with the ringing.

Many people have found them helpful in relieving the pressure from ear infections. An ear candling practitioner who was interviewed in the *Newsletter of Advanced Natural Therapies* had experience with her own grandchildren in regards to relief of ear infections. Her grandson, when he was about 1 1/2 yrs. old, had one ear drum burst with pressure from infectious fluid in his inner ear. The doctor immediately put him on medication to fight the infection. The next day his other ear was bothering him. A male nurse who lived next to the family, brought over his scope and found out that the other ear was just about ready to burst as well. They candled the ear that had already burst and was oozing infectious material and the other ear that was ready to burst. The candling pulled wax and infectious material from both ears. Three days later they took the boy back to the doctor who couldn't believe it. He said, "Your boy will not have any scar

whatsoever on that ear." The boy was four years old at the time of the interview and there had not been any problems since.

Another situation involved a phone call she received from a doctor from Pasadena, California. "He had gone to an orthopaedic convention where one doctor had a ten year old girl that they wanted to do ear surgery on. But because of her ear condition, they were afraid to do it. She had fluid in both ears so severe they had no idea how they could help her. This man had 10 doctors verify her condition, then they candled this girls ears, and it pulled the fluid from her inner ears."

There have also been many people with hearing difficulties that have benefited from ear candling. A client of mine who also attended a workshop is involved in doing a lot of instruction work with groups of people. She was finding it difficult to hear clearly what was being said when someone was talking on the other side of the room, the ear candling helped with her ability to hear more clearly.

Another elderly woman from Calgary who had her ears candled by a practitioner whom I had instructed found that after a few candling treatments, which removed large accumulations of ear wax, that she no longer required her recently purchased \$900 hearing aids in order to hear well.

A lady in her forties who had been unable to hear out of her one ear for many years had her ears candled several times over a 4 mo. period. Her ability to hear out of that ear at first showed no sign of improvement, then for a short time seemed to get worse. Soon she started to get little bursts of sound coming through on the bad side, with further treatment she is now at the point where she feels her hearing is equally balanced between both ears. In all she had 11 candles done on the bad ear over several months, slightly fewer on the good ear.

One of the more unusual case histories involved an elderly woman who was bothered with swelling "sub-cutaneous edema" in her facial, cranial, and neck area. Her doctors were at a complete loss, nothing seemed to be helping her, yet you could press on her skull and feel a sponginess to her skin. Ear candling helped to lessen the swelling.

So, you can see, ear candling has many applications. It has been of great benefit to a number of people and has been of no benefit to a number of others, except for the pleasant feeling.

Use your own good judgement, and listen to your body!

It is a very non-invasive technique, such that you would really have to use your imagination to harm someone with it. But please, for any concerns you have with health problems please seek the advice of a medical professional.

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F. What is commonly found inside the candle, and is it all from the ear?

Wax and powdery material is what is most commonly found in the candles after treatment. One practitioner also feels that there are tiny globules of fat as well, but without laboratory analysis it is very much based upon visual estimation. Some of the wax, approximately 1/3 tsp. is from the candle itself. Slightly less, about 1/4 tsp. of the powder is from the candle as well. This seems to be quite consistent if you take a candle, plug the bottom end, let it burn down to about 2 1/2" long, trimming the wick on a regular basis. (wick: burnt remains of the hollow cotton structure, approx. 1/2" in diameter). Therefore, it seems only logical, that anything more than this would not be from the candle, but would have been drawn from the ear instead.

With a bit of experience, you can visually determine the difference between candle wax and ear wax by both colour and volume. Most often, the ear wax is very slightly darker in colour.

The powdery material is either powdered candle wax, and tiny bits of ash from the cotton structure of the candle, or candida yeast. Powdery material is most frequently seen in abundance in clients who have problems with excess amounts of candida yeast in their bodies. The candida problem may or may not be displaying symptoms readily associated with candida, but if you are getting large amounts of powdery material in your candles, then chances are that is what you are extracting. Some candling practitioners with whom I keep in regular contact have found that patients from whom they get large wax plugs also start to have large amounts of candida material being removed once the large wax accumulations have been taken care of.

G. What supplies are required for ear candling?

This is the easy part. You will need; a lighter or matches, scissors, tin foil, wet paper towel, 2 paper or styrofoam plates, Q-tips and hydrogen peroxide. Oh yes, ear candles as well. Everything except for the ear candles most people already have at home.

In one of the disposable plates, cut a small cross, or puncture a small hole with a pen about 1/3 of the way between the centre and the edge of the plate. This makes it easier to put the plate in a self supporting position. Using the tapered end of the candle, twist the candle through the plate so that the plate holds the candle shaft in place. Remove candle and wrap this plate with tinfoil for heat and fire resistance. You will want to have enough of the tapered end sticking out the bottom to fit easily into the persons ear canal. With the second plate, cut a " V " shaped notch in it about 3" wide tapering to the middle. This plate is slid into place to catch the burnt wick of the candle when it is trimmed off with the scissors. Wrap this plate in tinfoil as well for insulation and fire protection purposes as the ash (wick) is very hot. The ash is then dropped into the bowl of water. At the end of the candling treatment, strain the water from the bowl, and put the remaining burnt pieces of wick in the garbage. They retain a fairly solid structure even when burnt, which may cause problems with some septic systems if flushed down the toilet.

Take 2 or 3 sheets of paper towel fold them over so that it is the size of one sheet, wet it with water so that it is equally damp all over but not dripping. This is draped over the candle to extinguish the flame.

The Q-tips and hydrogen peroxide are to clean the ear canal area after the process. Sometimes there are small bits of wax, powder, or even smoke residue in the ear canal.

H. Ear Candling Instructions

1. **Client positioning:** Have the person lie on their side with their head horizontal and their nose pointed slightly downward. This makes the angle of the ear opening perpendicular to the horizon, and makes it much easier for the candle to stand without continuous manual support.
2. **Positioning of the candle:** Insert the candle through the plate about 1 1/2" and do a pre-fit on the person to see how much length

needs to protrude in order to fit in their ear properly, also rotate the plate until you find a position that it will balance itself in. This saves either of you from getting stiff muscles from holding the candle in place. Each person and each ear has its own profile sometimes a few coins on the plate are necessary to balance it, other times I've placed a folded up towel between their head and the bottom of the plate.

3. **Inserting the candle:** Warm the tapered tip of the candle very slightly with a lighter. Warm wax conforms more easily to contours than cold wax. Touch the tip of the candle on the tragus "little piece of cartilage at the front of the ear opening". The skin here has a normal temperature sensitivity to it whereas the inside of the ear canal is very temperature sensitive. Insert the tip of the candle into the persons ear, remember to have the plate in the same position as you determined in the pre-fit. Have the person give you feed back or assistance for the right feel to the fit. It should feel similar to when you put the tip of your index finger in your ear as if to block out a loud noise, as if it is well seated, not just butted up against the ear canal structure. Tugging slightly back on the ear, or tugging slightly just forward of the ear canal can help to facilitate a proper fit.
4. **Lighting the candle:** One practitioner likes to sing "Happy Birthday" at this time. The first inch or so of the candle burning down will generally indicate whether the candle is properly seated and drawing upward as it should. If it is not properly seated you will notice a trail of smoke coming from the bottom of the candle indicating no upward draw. Try reangling the candle, tugging lightly forward of, or back on the ear, work with the clients feed back as to what feels right. If this is not successful, simply drape the damp paper towels over the flame to extinguish it and start over.
5. **Trimming the candle:** In the 15 minutes (approx.) that it takes for the candle to burn down, it is essential to keep the wick of the candle trimmed, so that the top remains open. The wick, if not trimmed, will fold over, blocking the upward flow of air which is the mechanical aspect of the candling process. The wick should be trimmed when it reaches 1"- 2" long, cutting it about half way between the base of the flame and the top of the wick is

a good rule of thumb. Slide the plate with the V-notch facing you around the candle in a position so that it will catch the wick when you trim it with the scissors. Remember, most scissors will push the wick away from you when cutting. In case the wick goes flying off the catcher plate and on to the plate holding the candle don't panic just use the point of one of the blades of your scissors to scoop it up and place it in the bowl of water. Allow the candle to burn down to about 1 1/2" above the plate, this leaves room for you to grasp it with your fingers, as well allows enough distance from the bottom tip of the candle that you shouldn't have to worry about any of the wax inside of the candle getting so warm that it will leak back into the ear.(Highly unpleasant experience!)

6. **Removing the candle and extinguishing the flame:** Give the wick one last trim to make the snuffing out process easier. Then slide your hand under the plate, remove the candle from the persons ear, plate and all before draping the wet paper towel over the flame leaving it in place for at least 30 seconds. Less smoke this way. Remove the ear candle from the plate and allow it to cool before unwrapping it or cutting it open.
7. **Repeat steps 1 - 6 for further candles:** See, I told you with a bit of instruction you could do it!
8. **Precautions and add ons:** Because of the cotton structure around which the candle is formed, as the candle burns, there is a certain amount of smoke involved in the process. Doing your ear candling treatments in a well ventilated room makes for a much more pleasant environment.

When opening up the ear candle to analyze the contents, the use of rubber gloves, a professional quality skin barrier cream, or if nothing else a real good scrubbing of your hands afterward is highly recommended. The reason for this being that your are drawing material from someone elses body, which may very likely contain bacteria or viruses for which your body has not developed antibodies for. Or, have the client unwrap the candle themselves, then have them wash their hands.

The person is most likely going to be quite surprised by the volume of material inside the candle. Please remind them that some of that is from the candle itself, approximately 1/3

tsp. of the wax and a 1/4 tsp. of the powder as a rule.

Remember to clear the ear canal with a Q-tip when done.

I. Other Information I have picked up along the way

For people who have very hard impacted wax in their ears there are a number of glycerine softeners available at drug stores in drop form which they can put in their ears for a few days before the candling treatment. Some people prefer garlic oil, some prefer olive oil, tea tree oil, essential oils of many varieties, some prefer not to put anything in their ears. One lady who attended a candling workshop who was a very talented and knowledgeable herbalist suggested that tea tree oil would be of benefit because of its strong anti-bacterial properties. Another source suggested garlic oil for people who are bothered with candida, as it would allow for a greater amount of candida to be withdrawn with less candles. This is entirely your clients decision in what they feel most comfortable with. Please respect your clients belief systems.

For people who are bothered by ringing in the ears, candling has been helpful in some cases and not in others. However, the herb Ginkgo Biloba has a track record of being very helpful with tinnitus. Ginkgo Biloba serves to relax the arterial walls enabling increased blood flow, especially in the cranial area, resulting in increased mental alertness, because of oxygen and nutrients being made more easily available to the brain. In this same fashion it has been helpful with many conditions of the ears, eyes, nose, throat, and brain. Not to be considered the miracle cure-all of the milenium, but certainly helpful. Ginger as a herb also posses similar beneficial effects upon circulation, but to a slightly lesser extent.

If you happen to have a 276 hz. tuning fork at your disposal, you can perform what is known as the Weber Test. Strike the tuning fork and place it dead centre on the top of the head, if the person can hear the tuning fork more clearly through one ear than the other, then the ear in which the tuning fork was louder is the more impacted of the two.

What? No tuning fork? Well then you can easily perform the "Greg Webb" sniff and listen test, as a before and after assessment for a difference in your client. Before you begin the candling procedure, have your client plug one nostril and inhale deeply, paying particular

attention to the way the breath feels as it enters the nasal cavity, and the ease or lack thereof in breathing through each nostril individually. Have them repeat this after the candling treatment has been completed on one ear and again at the end of the session. I've yet to have a client that wasn't pleased at the difference in how much easier their breathing was. The listen part involves simply counting the numbers 1 - 5 softly in a monotone voice in each ear, this gives the person a before and after reference as to any change in hearing ability.

Another lady who is very gifted in healing and the metaphysical realms, channelling etc. claims that on her, it has made a difference in the clarity of received messages and is helping to develop another chakra energy centre between the physical and psychic energy realms. Myself I do not possess any such talents, (none that I know about yet), so I can't really comment in any fashion other than to say, "What ever works for you, use it to the best potential that you possibly can." She also feels that the ear candling process, in many ways, serves to facilitate and enhance development of expanded awareness.

Yes, ear candling has been done on animals. I would leave this to the veterinarians, however since it would most likely be a lot safer if the animal was not conscious for the process. Visions of swirling claws, hooves and teeth come to mind otherwise.

J. Summary

My hope in writing this is to help spread a bit of knowledge around about ear candling. It is a pleasant thing to have done, and with a bit of basic guidance can be done by most people. There have probably been many variances in the technique as it has been performed by, and on different people. Some, no doubt different than what I have described. There are many difficult ways to do the ear candling process. What I want to see is people being able to do this the easier way, without any difficulties, to have a bit of guidance, and a source which people can refer to, to learn how to help themselves and others through the benefits of ear candling. So go forth with love and care and contact me if you have any questions. Information and supplies available.

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