

Ear drops

Many divers complain about pain in their auditory canals during their diving holiday and have no idea how to deal with it. Every diver should therefore know something about this topic, so that a diving trip does not come to a premature and painful end.

Some divers regularly get painful inflammations of their auditory canals, especially when diving in warm water. And it is often self-inflicted: people often find earwax uncomfortable and like to remove it, although it actually represents a natural protective layer against infections. In addition, using the notorious cotton buds can not only damage the ear canal and eardrum, but often push the earwax even deeper.

In fact, the most important method of preventing this is regularly rinsing the ears with pure, clean water after each dive. For this purpose you should use the same water that you drink rather than tap water, because the latter may be polluted in some countries. In addition, you should wear a hat that covers your ears or a headband as wind protection, especially in draughty conditions.



It is also possible to use "divers' ear drops", which are concocted from various mixtures. This is, however, not without controversy, because some of the possible ingredients themselves can irritate the skin in the auditory canal. It is mainly the alcohol added as a disinfectant that irritates the auditory canal, because it removes its oils and dries it out, making it more sensitive.

It is better to use glacial acetic acid as one of the ingredients, which also acts as a disinfectant, but does not irritate or dry up the skin. Rather, it maintains the slightly acidic environment of the auditory canal. Still, experts disagree about the "correct" mixture. In most cases, alcohol is also added to the commercially available preparations for preservation.

What is also important is the care of the auditory canal after a treatment. One drop of olive oil (from the pharmacist) applied in the auditory canal on each side is for instance very suitable for this purpose.

One mixture of "divers' ear drops" to buy at the pharmacist's is Normison® ear spray or drops or Dolphiner® ear spray. However, it depends on each diver whether or not care of the auditory canal is necessary and helpful.

It should finally be mentioned that medicinal products may also be used in case of an inflammation of the auditory canal. This is especially recommended if the diver is prone to such inflammation. Panotile® Cipro with the active ingredient ciprofloxacin, for example, is well-known, but other active ingredients such as ofloxacin, neomycin or polymyxin B are also effective and, depending on the holiday destination, are available on prescription or over the counter in pharmacies.

Fungal infections in the ear are also common. Antibiotics do not help here and tend to worsen the symptoms. Fungal infections in the ear are treated with antifungal ear drops or sprays.

Therefore, if symptoms persist for several days without improvement despite ear drops, a doctor should be consulted so that the ear canal and middle ear can be inspected and cleaned and the correct preparation can be prescribed.

It is generally not advisable to dive with ear complaints. If you decide to use a preparation with a pain-relieving additive, you must not dive under any circumstances, as your sense of the necessary pressure equalisation will be impaired.