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HEALTH ALERTS

Ear candles

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is warning consumers not to use ear candles due to risk of burns, perforated eardrums and blockage of the ear canal. These are especially dangerous for children, who are at higher risk for injuries and complications associated with use.

Description: Hollow cones about 10 inches long made from a fabric tube soaked in beeswax, paraffin or a mix of the two. Ear candles are marketed to draw “impurities” or “toxins” out of the ear. Other claims include relief from sinus and ear infection, headache and earache, and improved hearing. (FDA has found no evidence to support the effectiveness of these devices for any medical benefits.)

Sold at: Health food stores, flea markets, health spas and salons, and commercial Web sites.

To report injury related to the use of ear candles, call 800-332-1088 or visit www.fda.gov/MedWatch/report.htm.