Ear Candles: Risk of Serious Injuries

FDA MedWatch

FDA is notifying consumers and healthcare providers of its warning not to use ear candles - a hollow cone about 10 inches long made from a fabric tube soaked in beeswax, paraffin or a mixture of the two - because they can cause *serious injuries*, even when used according to the manufacturer's directions. According to advertised claims, a burning ear candle draws ear wax and "impurities" or "toxins" out of the ear canal. Other claims for ear candles include relief from sinus and ear infections, headache and earache, as well as improved hearing, "blood purification," improvements in brain function, and cure cancer. FDA has found no valid scientific evidence to support the safety or effectiveness of these devices for any medical claims or benefits. FDA has received reports of burns, perforated eardrums and blockage of the ear canal which required outpatient surgery from the use of ear candles.

FDA is especially concerned because some ear candles are being advertised for use in children. Children of any age, including babies, are likely at increased risk for injuries and complications if they are exposed to ear candles. Small children and infants may move during the use of the device, increasing the likelihood of wax burns and ear candle wax plugging up the ear canal. Also, their smaller ear canal size may make children more susceptible than adults to injuries.

Ear candles are sold and promoted in a variety of locations, including health food stores, flea markets, health spas and salons, as well as on commercial web sites.

Consumers and health care professionals are strongly encouraged to report injury related to the use of ear candles to the FDA's MedWatch Safety Information and Adverse Event Reporting Program:

- Online: www.fda.gov/MedWatch/report.htm [1]
- Phone: 1-800-332-1088
- Mail: return the postage-paid FDA form 3500, which may be downloaded from the MedWatch "Download Forms" page [2], to address on the pre-addressed form
- Fax: 1-800-FDA-0178

SOURCE [3]

Source URL (retrieved on *09/23/2014 - 3:59am*):
http://www.ecnmag.com/news/2010/02/ear-candles-risk-serious-injuries

Links:
[1] https://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/medwatch/medwatch-online.htm
[2] http://www.fda.gov/Safety/MedWatch/HowToReport/DownloadForms/default.htm
[3] http://www.fda.gov/Safety/MedWatch/SafetyInformation/SafetyAlertsforHumanM

edicalProducts/ucm201108.htm