Cotton Swab Use Goes Too Far

A Canadian coroner is warning people about the overuse of cotton swabs after a Montreal man died following an ear infection last year.

The coroner said the 43-year-old man used cotton swabs quite often to clean his ears. At one point, he developed an outer ear infection that migrated to his inner ear. It was suspected that the man's overuse of a swab perforated his eardrum, causing the infection.

The man was taken to hospital after his condition worsened one night. He died of meningitis, an infection of the fluid around the spinal cord and brain. The coroner believes the man's ear infection contributed to the meningitis. As a result, the coroner has asked Health Canada to place warnings on cotton swab products, with a diagram of an ear with a red "X" through it.

For more information, check out the websites:
http://www.drgreene.org/body.cfm?id=21&action=detail&ref=461
and
http://www.medicinenet.com/objects_or_insects_in_ear/article.htm