

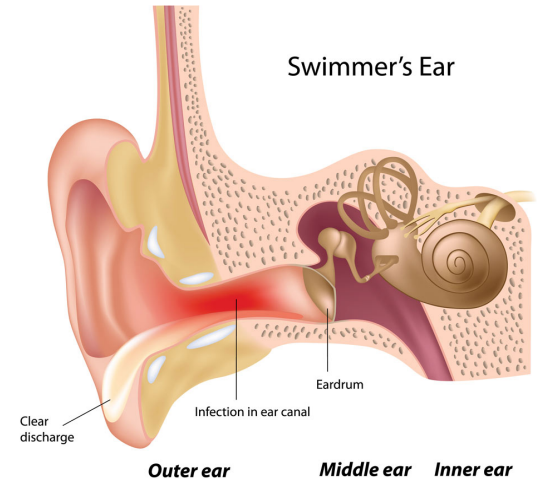
Q&A: Otitis Externa - AKA Swimmer's Ear

Q: What is Swimmer's ear?

A: It is a term used for an **infection of the ear canal**.

Q: What are the symptoms of Swimmer's ear?

A: Ouch! Your child will complain of pain when the ear is touched. The ear may be red and swollen. There may be drainage from the ear canal or muffled hearing.



Q: What causes Swimmer's ear? :

A:

- Most commonly, it is caused from **water exposure** or persistent wetness in the ear canal from swimming, bathing, wet hair.
- People with **ear canal dermatitis** are more prone to getting swimmer's ear...
 - What is canal dermatitis? Canal dermatitis refers to dry skin in the ear canal that commonly occurs from trapped moisture in the ear canals. Frequent causes include going to bed with wet hair overlying ears, frequent ear bud use, or hearing aid use. Dry skin leads to breaks in the skin, making the canal more susceptible to bacteria and infection.
 - The ear skin may be itchy and the skin flaky and dry.

Q: How is it treated?

A:

- Most often, swimmer's ear is treated with antibiotic ear drops. If there is significant swelling of the ear canal an otowick (tiny sponge) may be placed into the ear canal to ensure ear drops are able to properly get into the swollen canal.
- It is important to keep the ears otherwise strictly dry while actively undergoing treatment (that means no swimming under water or getting water in the ear).
- The ear canal may need to be cleaned in the office to remove dead skin and debris.



Q: What if my child is prone to recurrent episodes?

A:

- In the case of recurrent episodes of Swimmer's ear, we recommend keeping the ears strictly dry. You may consider purchasing ear plugs or head band to wear while swimming and bathing. **Ask our staff to tell you about products to keep the ears dry.**
- Always make sure that you dry the ears with a towel and use a blow dryer to dry your hair after showers. Do not go to bed with wet ears and hair. This can lead to repeat infections.