

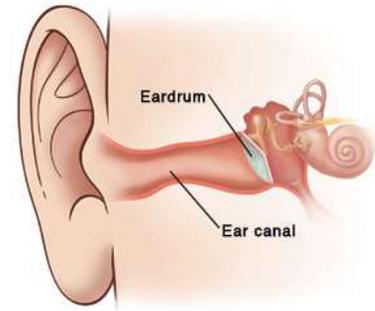
Swimmer's Ear: Otitis Externa

What is Swimmer's Ear?

Swimmer's Ear is an infection of the skin lining of the ear canal. It is also called Otitis Externa. It happens when water is in the ear too long. When water gets trapped in the ear canal, the lining gets damp and swollen. It can then become infected.

What are the signs and symptoms?

- Itchy and/or painful ear canals.
- More pain when the outer ear is moved up and down, or when the tab of the outer ear is pushed in.
- A feeling that the ear is plugged.
- Clear ear drainage.



How is it treated?

Your child will need to be looked at by a healthcare provider to see if there is an infection. If your child has swimmers ear, the provider may prescribe:

- Antibiotic eardrops. The doctor or nurse will tell you how and when to give this medicine. It may take 2 or 3 days of using the eardrops before your child starts to feel better. The drops should be used as ordered by your doctor.
- Acetaminophen or Ibuprofen may be given for ear pain or fever.

Special directions

- Your child should not swim until treatment is done and symptoms are gone. Swimming will slow recovery.
- Do not have your child use earplugs unless the doctor tells you to. They can jam earwax back into the ear canal. They don't keep water out of the ear canals.
- Don't put cotton swabs (e.g., Q-tips®) into the ear canals. Wax will build-up and trap water behind it. This increases the risk of Swimmer's Ear.



ALERT: Call your child's doctor, nurse, or clinic if you have any questions or concerns or if your child has:

- A fever greater than 101.5 °F (38.6°C) that lasts more than 2 days.
- Pain that gets worse or still has swelling after 3 days of treatment.
- Special health care needs that were not covered by this information.

This teaching sheet is meant to help you care for your child. It does not take the place of medical care. Talk with your healthcare provider for diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up.