



Swimmer's Ear & External Ear Infection



WHAT IS EXTERNAL EAR INFECTION/ OTITIS EXTERNA/'SWIMMER'S EAR'?

This is an inflammation or infection of the ear canal. Swimmer's ear can be caused by the irritation of the canal through the use of cotton swabs, hairpins, fingernails, or any other object that enters the canal. It can also be caused by swimming in salt water, fresh water, or pools, or even by showering.

HOW IS EXTERNAL EAR INFECTION TREATED?

- Medicated eardrops prescribed by your practitioner
- Tylenol or Advil, taken as directed, to control pain
- Moist or dry heat applied to outer ear for comfort
- No water in ear for one week
- No Q-tips or other objects in ear

HOW CAN I PREVENT EXTERNAL EAR INFECTION?

- Avoid putting foreign objects into your ears. This includes cotton swabs, hairpins, fingers, and any other objects that may irritate or push earwax up into the ear canal.
- Remove water from your ear canals after showering or swimming. Use the corner of a dry towel or face cloth, and tilt your head from side to side to remove water. If you are prone to ear infections, use a solution of equal parts alcohol (or water) and white vinegar. Use a dropper to insert the solution into your ear canals after swimming or showering. You can buy similar solutions commercially.

CALL YOUR PRACTITIONER IF YOU EXPERIENCE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING:

- Symptoms that get worse or do not improve after 5 days
- Redness on or around your ear
- Fever or shaking chills
- Fever that lasts more than 24 hours
- Nausea or vomiting

**CONTACT A HEALTH SERVICES
TRIAGE NURSE AT (603) 862-2856
IF YOU HAVE ANY ADDITIONAL
QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS.**



HEALTH SERVICES

(603)862-2856 *during hours of operation* | (603) 862-Well (9355) *after hours*

www.unh.edu/health-services

