

Otitis Externa

What is it?

- **Otitis Externa**– most commonly a bacterial infection, occasionally fungal or a variety of noninfectious systemic or local dermatologic processes, inflammatory process; infection in the external auditory canal;
- **External Otitis/Swimmer's Ear**- is an infection of the skin covering the outer ear and ear canal; if acute is commonly a bacterial infection caused by streptococcus, pseudomonas or staphylococcus types of bacteria; usually caused by excessive water exposure; when water collects in the ear canal; abrasions, cuts or cotton swab injury can also cause a bacterial infection of the ear canal



Symptoms:

- **Symptoms**- discomfort to the external auditory canal, erythema and swelling of the canal with variable discharge, pain; infection, itchy, ear feels full, the ear canal can swell shut, the side of the face can become swollen, the lymph nodes may enlarge making it painful to open the jaw; decreased hearing

Facts:

- **Caused by**- excessive moisture and trauma impair the canal's natural defenses; swimming, perspiration, high humidity, water contaminated with bacteria, high environmental temperatures, mechanical removal of cerumen, insertion of foreign objects as fingernails, hearing aids, ear plugs or cotton swabs, trauma to the ear canal; chronic dermatologic disease as eczema, psoriasis, seborrheic dermatitis and acne

- **Bacterial**- 90% of cases
- **Fungal**- 10% of the cases
- **Affects**- 4 in 1,000 persons in the United States



What can I do?

- **See your Health Care Provider**- for more information; do a thorough cleaning of the canal, avoid flushing, removal of debris; topical medications to control edema and infection; oral antibiotics