

Otitis Externa (Swimmer's Ear):

Otitis Externa is an infection of the outer ear, specifically the ear canal. Often, it is called swimmer's ear, because one of the common causes is swimming. Several other causes of an outer ear infection include use of Q-tips and hearing aids. Anything that disrupts the skin of the ear canal or leads to increase moisture in the ear canal can lead to otitis externa.

Usually, an outer ear infection presents with ear pain and/or drainage from the ear. Other symptoms can include hearing loss or fullness/pressure in the ear. Itchy ears are indicative of a possible fungal infection.

Treatment of an outer ear infection involves gentle cleaning of the ear canal (debridement), which actively removes the infection. Additionally, ear drops are used after debridement to remove any remaining infection. Selection of an appropriate ear drop is based on the source of the infection – bacterial or fungal.

A majority of patients have quick relief of symptoms after debridement and use of an appropriate ear drop.