

Swimmers ear, also known as otitis externa is Inflammation of the canal between the Eardrum and the external opening of the Ear.

What to look for

- itching inside the ear.
- watery discharge from the ear.
- severe pain and tenderness in the ear, especially when moving your head or when gently pulling on your earlobe.
- a foul-smelling, yellowish discharge from the ear.
- temporarily muffled hearing (caused by blockage of the ear canal).

This is a very common problem that afflicts the outer ear. Otherwise known as otitis externa, an inflammation occurs in the outer ear canal. The inflammation can often lead to an infection. It can often occur in swimmers but it can also afflict non-swimmers.

Causes

Too much moisture inside the ear can cause this complaint. This can occur through normal showering or swimming. The moisture causes an eczema in the ear which can be quite sore and itchy. If the skin tears or breaks, bacteria can get in and cause infection.

Traditional Treatment

This condition is not usually serious and it may just clear up on its own or you can try to relieve the problem with alternative solutions. If the condition does not improve in a day or two, see your doctor for more aggressive treatments.

Personal Care

- Make sure you keep the infected ear dry - wear a shower cap or use ear plugs.
- To relieve pain, place a warm heating pad or compress on the infected ear.

Prevention

- Do not clean your ears too thoroughly, the ear needs some wax for protection.
- Wear earplugs when swimming.
- Avoid swimming in dirty or polluted water.
- Try to avoid water getting into your ears while showering.

When to seek further professional advice

- you are experiencing dizziness or ringing in the ears.
- you have severe pain.