



Otitis externa (commonly called swimmer's ear)

By Cecelia Damask, DO

Affecting the outer ear, swimmer's ear is a condition causing pain resulting from inflammation, irritation, or infection. These symptoms are experienced when water gets trapped in your ear allowing bacteria to spread, causing a painful sensation. Because this condition commonly affects swimmers, it is known as swimmer's ear. While it affects mostly children and

teenagers, it can also affect those with eczema (a condition that causes the skin to itch) or excess earwax.

What causes swimmer's ear?

A common source of the infection is increased moisture trapped in the ear canal, bathing, or showering; increased humidity or living in warm moist climates may also contribute to this common infection. When water is trapped in the ear canal, bacteria that normally inhabit the skin and ear canal

multiply, causing infection and irritation of the ear canal. If the infection gets worse, it may affect other areas of the ear. Swimmer's ear needs to be treated to reduce pain and eliminate any effect it may have on your hearing. Other factors that may contribute to swimmer's ear include:

- Contact with excessive bacteria that may be present in hot tubs or polluted water;
- Excessive cleaning of the ear canal with cotton swabs;
- Contact with certain chemicals such as hair spray or hair dye (avoid by placing cotton balls in your ears when using these products);
- Damage to the skin of the ear canal following water irrigation to remove wax;
- A cut in the skin of the ear canal; and
- Other skin conditions affecting the ear canal such as eczema or seborrhea.

What are the signs and symptoms?

The most common symptoms of swimmer's ear are an itchy ear and mild to moderate pain that gets worse when you tug on the auricle (outer ear). Other signs and symptoms may include any of the following:

- Sensation that the ear is blocked or full;
- Drainage;
- Fever;
- Decreased hearing;
- Intense pain that may radiate to the neck, face, or side of the head;
- The auricle may appear to be pushed forward or away from the skull;
- Swollen lymph nodes (located in your neck); and
- Redness and swelling of the skin around the ear.

If left untreated, complications resulting from swimmer's ear may include:

Hearing loss. When the infection clears up, hearing usually returns to its normal state.

Recurring ear infections. Without treatment, infection can occur.



Treat your family to a different kind of place this summer.

Welcome to Hyatt Place® Orlando/Lake Mary. We created a different kind of hotel experience that's more in step with your summer travel plans. Where you'll enjoy spacious rooms with a 42" flat-panel HDTV, cozy-corner sofa-sleeper, in-room refrigerator, and our Hyatt Grand Bed™. Plus amenities such as a pool, complimentary continental breakfast, freshly prepared food served 24/7, and free Wi-Fi everywhere, all for a great rate.

\$99.00 PER ROOM. PER NIGHT. VALID 5/20/09 - 9/30/09.

Book your stay this summer and take advantage of our Sunshine Guaranteed offer. If it rains at least .5 inches any day during your stay, we'll give you a free night for each day it rains.

Call 888 HYATT HP (888 492 8847) or visit HyattPlaceOrlandoLakeMary.com and request Offer Code: SUNS.



Welcome to a different place.™

1255 South International Parkway • Lake Mary, FL 32746 • 407 995 5555

Adjacent to Walgreen's near the corner of Lake Mary Boulevard and South International Parkway

Offer valid 5/20/09 to 9/30/09 at Hyatt Place Orlando/Lake Mary. Two-night minimum length of stay required. All hotel reservations are subject to availability and must be made in advance by 60/15/30. Offer is not valid with groups/conventions and may not be combined with other promotional offers. Guest must request offer code SUNS at time of reservation. One free night certificate will be provided at checkout for each night of the stay that it rains at least .5 inches at Orlando International Airport as recorded by the National Weather Service. Rental will also be audited by an independent agency. Free nights are subject to the full terms and conditions as presented on the certificate. Rate is per room, per night, excluding service charges, taxes and other incidental expenses. Rate is based on double occupancy and standard room accommodations. Additional guests may be subject to additional hotel charges. A limited number of rooms are allocated to this promotion. Promotional blackout periods may apply due to seasonal periods or special events, and normal arrival/departure restrictions apply. Hyatt reserves the right to alter or withdraw this program at any time without notice. The trademarks Hyatt®, Hyatt Place® and related marks are trademarks of Hyatt Corporation. © 2009 Hyatt Corporation. All rights reserved.

Bone and cartilage damage. When ear infections spread to the base of your skull, brain, or cranial nerves they become painful and dangerous. Diabetics and older adults are more at risk.

To evaluate you for swimmer's ear, your doctor will look for redness and swelling in your ear and may take a sample of fluid or discharge in your ear to test for the presence of bacteria or fungus (ear culture) if you have recurrent infections.

How is swimmer's ear treated?

Treatment for the early stages of swimmer's ear includes careful cleaning of the ear canal by an ear physician and eardrops that inhibit bacterial growth.

How should eardrops be applied?

Drops are more easily administered if done by someone other than the patient.

The patient should lie down with the affected ear facing upwards.

Drops should be placed in the ear until the ear is full.

After drops are administered, the patient should remain lying down for a few minutes so that the drops can be absorbed.

For more severe infections, your doctor may prescribe antibiotics to be applied directly to the ear. If the ear canal is swollen shut, a sponge or wick may be placed in the ear canal so that the antibiotic drops will be effective. Pain medication may also be prescribed. If you have tubes in your eardrum, a non-ototoxic (will not affect your hearing) topical treatment should be used. Topical antibiotics are effective for infection limited to the ear canal. Oral antibiotics may also be prescribed if the infection goes beyond the skin of the ear canal.

Follow-up appointments are very important to monitor progress of the infection, to repeat ear cleaning, and to replace the ear wick as needed. Your otolaryngologist (your ear doctor) has specialized equipment and expertise to effectively clean the ear canal and treat swimmer's ear. With proper treatment, most infections should heal in 7-10 days.

Do:

Use ear plugs when swimming.

Use a towel or hair dryer to dry your ears.

Have your ears cleaned periodically by an otolaryngologist if you have itchy, flaky or scaly ears, or extensive earwax.

Don't:

Use cotton swabs. They may pack earwax and dirt deeper into the ear canal, remove the layer of earwax that protects your ear, and

irritate the thin skin of the ear canal, creating the perfect environment for infection.

Tips for prevention

A dry ear is unlikely to become infected, so it is important to keep the ears free of moisture during swimming or bathing.

Dr. Damask is a board-certified otolaryngologist, a physician who practices the medical management of diseases of the ears, nose, and throat. Her specialty is in the treatment of allergies. Dr. Damask attended medical school in Chicago, and was in private practice in North Carolina prior to opening Lake Mary Ear, Nose, Throat & Allergy.

LML

Dental ASSOCIATES of Lake Mary

COSMETIC & RECONSTRUCTIVE DENTISTRY

State-of-the-art practice specializing in

- Full Mouth Reconstruction
- Implant Supported Prosthesis
- Complete & Partial Dentures
- Crowns and Bridges
- Lumineers (ultra-thin) and Veneers

Complemented by

- Extractions, Root Canals
- In-Office Teeth Whitening, Tooth Colored Restorations

Deepta Mehta DMD, CAGS
PROSTHODONTIST

Kalpesh Mehta DMD
GENERAL DENTIST

LUMINEERS BY CERINATE

Call for a Complimentary Consultation
407.829.2123
We Accept Most Insurance
Affordable Payment Plans Available

MEMBER OF: ACP ADIA
ALUMNI OF: BOSTON UNIVERSITY
CareCredit
www.dentalassociatesoflakemary.com
1301 South International Pkwy., Suite 2041 | Lake Mary, Florida 32746