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- OTITIS EXTERNA (External Ear Infection).

This infection is very different from middle ear infection, it is located in the external ear canal and it is frequently associated with swimming in pools, ponds or lakes, also known as swimmers' ear. It is seldom complicated with middle ear effusion, unless middle ear infection is also present.

Agents frequently responsible for this infection are fungi and one particular germ called Pseudomonas, but other germs may also cause external otitis.

Treatment is simple, it requires the use of ear drops that are usually a combination of an antibiotic, an anti-fungal and an anti-inflammatory agent. Oral antibiotics are seldom necessary, unless middle ear infection is also present.

Risk factors are mainly:

- Frequent swimmers, especially in pools.
- External ear canal contamination with a foreign body.
- Introduction of Q-tips or sharp objects to the external ear canal.
- Contamination of the external ear canal with infectious secretions originated from a perforated middle ear infection.

External ear infection may be prevented in swimmers by applying 1 drop of Alcohol 90° or Vosol ® into each ear canal right after a swimming session.