



SWIMMER'S EAR

Swimmer's ear or external ear infection is a common ailment for those who swim. This inflammation and infection of the outer ear canal can be quite painful. When ears are frequently immersed in water, the ear wax becomes dry and may wash away. Increased moisture, along with the loss of protective wax, makes the ear canal an ideal place for infection to take hold.

Treatment involves antibiotic ear drops and may include placement of a wick. If the canal is blocked with wax and infected material, it may be washed so that the drops can reach the infected area. When swelling narrows the canal severely, a wick is used allowing medication to penetrate more deeply. If a wick is used, it is important that it stays in at least 24 hours. If it falls out during the first day, call the office. If it hasn't fallen out in three days, gently pull it out.

Swimming is NOT allowed during treatment.

Keeping the ears dry helps to preventing future external ear infections. After swimming, dry the ears well. Using a dropper, fill the canals with a mixture of: TWO parts rubbing alcohol with ONE part vinegar. This helps to evaporate the water and make the area acidic to fight infection. Commercially prepared, over the counter after swimming drops are also available.

