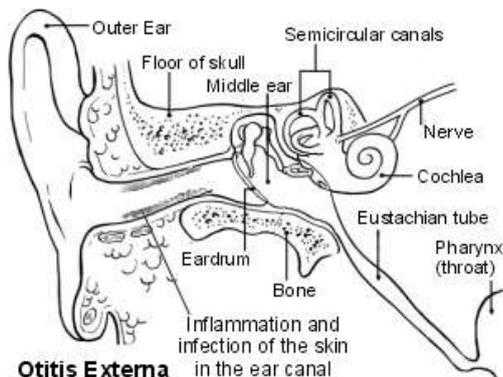


Otitis Externa

Otitis Externa is an inflammation of the ear canal. Occasionally the outer ear (pinna) can be affected. The inflammation may be caused by infection, allergy, or irritation caused by inserting foreign bodies i.e cotton buds into the canal to clean it. Wax works its way out naturally.

Anatomy of the ear



Symptoms

- Itching.
- Discharge.
- Impaired hearing.
- Pain.

Causes

- Some shampoo's can cause irritation, poking into the canal can cause inflammation and swelling in the canal.
- Swimmers are 5 times more prone than non swimmers to get otitis externa.
- Eczema or psoriasis may occur in the ear canal.
- Ear syringing may irritate the ear canal and cause inflammation.

Treatment

Ear drops or sprays are usually prescribed, they usually contain a steroid to reduce the inflammation and itch. Occasionally an antibiotic may also be added to the preparation.

The Doctor or nurse will explain how to insert these drops correctly.

- Tilt your head to one side with the affected ear upwards.
- Put the advised amount of drops into the canal and stay in this position for 1-2 minutes gently massaging in front of the ear to help the drops go in.

Oral antibiotics are occasionally needed if the infection is severe.

Paracetamol and Ibuprofen (if you are able to take it) will usually ease the pain.

Dos and Don'ts

- Do not block the ear canal with cotton wool or tissue.
- Clean the ear at regular intervals with a clean tissue.
- Do not use cotton buds.
- Keep the ear as dry as possible when bathing and washing your hair.
- If you swim regularly wear a swimming cap or wear ear plugs.

References : www.patient.co.uk www.cks.library.uk

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