



## Outer Ear Infections

### What causes Outer Ear Infections?

- Water exposure containing bacteria (eg. swimming pools)
- Ear canal trauma (eg. cotton buds, fingers etc) or excessive cleaning of the ear
- Unhealthy skin or immune system (eg. diabetes, skin problems)

### What symptoms can you have?

- Pain in the ear itself (can be quite severe)
- Reduced hearing or blocked sensation
- Discharge from the ear canal
- Swelling of the ear canal and sometimes around the ear

### What your ENT Doctor wants to know?

- Is this a one off or recurrent?
- Have you been swimming recently?
- Have you been probing your ear with a cotton bud or bobby pin etc?
- Do you have diabetes or skin problems?
- Have any swabs been taken by your GP?

### How are Outer Ear Infections treated?

- Cleaning the ear of debris is the most important first line of treatment (your ENT Doctor will do this safely with suction)
- Drops work better than oral antibiotics
- The ear should be kept dry

### Worrying Symptoms:

- Ongoing pain and discharge despite treatment (especially in diabetic patients)
- Ongoing hearing loss after resolution of the infection
- Increasing swelling around the ear
- Weakness of the facial muscles on the side of the infection

You should contact our rooms immediately for further review if you are experiencing any of these symptoms.

### More information:

Your ENT Doctor will most likely review you after starting treatment to make sure you are improving and that there are no ongoing issues.