OTITIS EXTERNA (SWIMMER’S EAR)

**FEATURES**
- Pain and tenderness of the ear canal (may spread to the outer ear)
- Discharge
- Itching
- Swollen ear and ear canal
- Occasionally reduced hearing
- Sometimes noises in the ear

**DIAGNOSIS**
Otoscopy – appearance of skin of outer ear canal red scaled and peeling “soggy” cardboard like appearance
Ear canal may be inflamed and swollen and painful to touch
Swab

**OTHER AGGRAVATING FACTORS**
- Swimming
- Hot and humid climates
- Eczema
- Cotton bud use

**TREATMENT**
- Dry ear toilet
- Antibiotic drops (Ciproxin HC as ear drops)
- Use of otowicks for swollen ear canal
- Swab for microscopy

**COMPLICATIONS**
- Narrowing of the ear canals
- Facial cellulitis
- Malignant otitis externa leading to osteomyelitis of the temporal bone
- Fungal infection

**INDICATIONS FOR REFERRAL**
- Failure to resolve after 1–2 weeks of treatment

**PREVENTATIVE MEASURES**
- Avoid water entering the ear
- Ear protection when swimming and bathing
- Avoid use of cotton buds or inserting other objects into the ear