

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

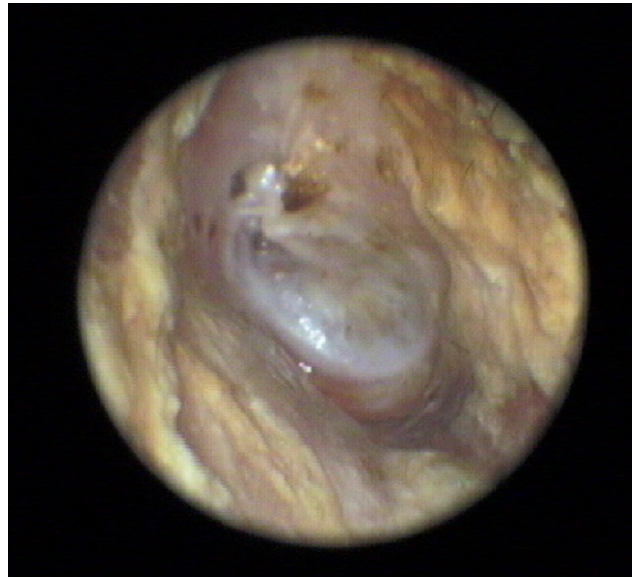
Otoscopy – appearance of skin of outer ear canal
red scaled and peeling
“soggy” cardboard like appearance
Ear canal may be inflamed and swollen
and painful to touch
Swab

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