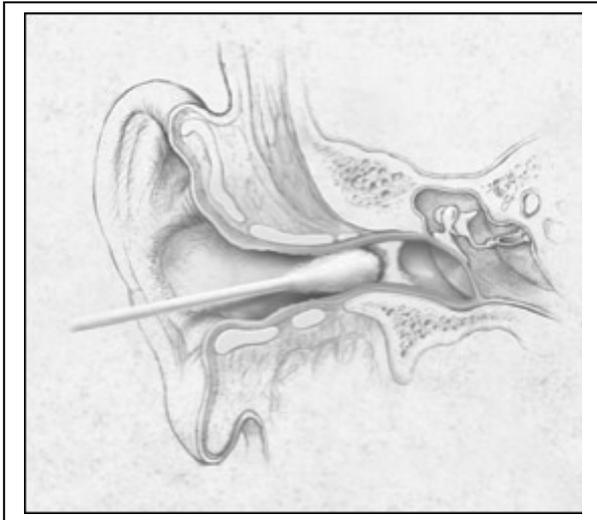


# Otitis externa (outer ear infection)



You have an outer ear infection. This is usually a bacterial (occasionally fungal) infection of the delicate skin of the ear canal. Normally, wax protects the ear canal from infection. Damage to the delicate skin by using a cotton tip, fingernail or loss of wax due to swimming can allow infection in. Ear skin allergy (eczema) can also cause an itchy, oozing outer ear and increase the chance of infection.

Antibiotic drops will most commonly resolve the infection. Dr

Iseli will carefully clean your ear canal of infected debris (pus, shed skin) to allow the drops to penetrate to where they are needed. Sometimes a wick (small sponge) needs to be placed to get the drops past a badly swollen ear canal – this will also provide some pain relief. Sometimes one or two doses of steroids (prednisolone) are used to reduce swelling and provide comfort.

## HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS:

- Put 3 drops in the affected ear 3x/day for 10 days. After putting the drops in, you will need to lay down with the affected ear facing up for 5 minutes so the drops will remain in the ear canal and run down and fill the canal.
- Prior to getting up, put a cotton ball gently in your ear canal to catch any drops that fall out. Leave this plug out far enough so it can be easily removed.
- Finish all medications, or use for the length of time as instructed. Continue the drops even if your problem seems to be doing well after a couple days.
- Do NOT put anything smaller than your elbow in your ear canal (cotton-tipped swabs push the wax into the ear and damage the delicate skin).
- Keep the ear dry until the infection is cured. Do not swim. Use a cotton ball covered with Vaseline when showering to keep water out.
- Take paracetamol (panadol or panadeine) regularly (max. 4g/day) for pain. You may also take ibuprofen or neurofen in addition if the pain is severe.

A final exam by Dr Iseli or your GP is important to evaluate your hearing and inspect the eardrum. Occasionally, drainage may come from a hole in the ear drum which is not easily noticed during the infection when the ear canal is very swollen.

## SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You develop facial weakness or numbness or have change in your voice.
- You have severe pain or headache.
- You have a high fever, vomiting, or dizziness.

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