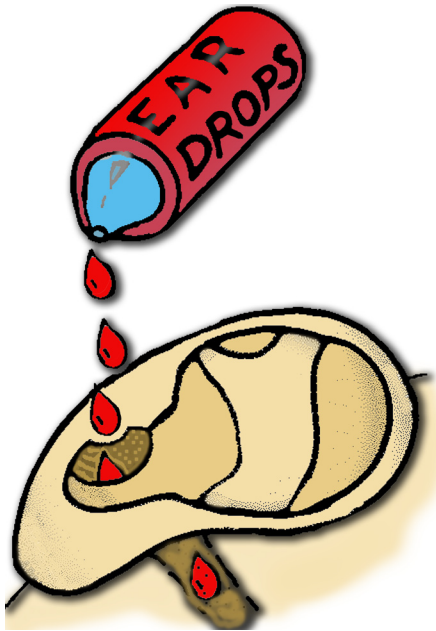




Swimmer's Ear: How Is Different Than A Middle Ear Infection?



When a child has a typical ear infection, he or she has bacteria in their *middle ear*. With *Swimmer's Ear*, the *middle ear* is fine while the skin lining of the ear canal is infected.

Children with *swimmer's ear* have ear pain (especially on movement of the outer ear), and sometimes a discharge from the ear. We will need to examine your child first to make sure there is no middle ear infection.

Middle ear infection will usually be treated with oral antibiotics. Water in the ear has no effect on a middle ear infection, but water bacteria causes *swimmer's ear*. *Swimmer's ear* is treated with prescription ear drops.

Ear plugs are helpful to prevent *swimmer's ear* only if a proper seal is formed. We do not recommend earplugs for most children swimming in pools, as they may have trouble hearing the lifeguard! We prefer 2% acetic acid rinses (*Star-Otic*, *Swim Ease*, *Vo-Sol*) before and after swimming for prevention of *swimmer's ear*. We also remind parents that *Q-tips* should not be used in the ear and may allow water bacteria to cause *swimmer's ear*. Children with too much earwax may benefit from having the wax removed as it may trap water bacteria in the ear canal.

We hope you find our Parentletter helpful and informative. Please keep in mind that receipt of this newsletter does not create a doctor/patient relationship and that it is not meant to serve as a substitute for professional medical advice. For particular pediatric medical concerns, including decisions about diagnoses, medications and other treatments, or if you have any questions after reading this newsletter, we encourage you to speak with your child's pediatrician.

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