

## Advice for People with Ear Problems

- Keep your ear canals dry when washing your hair, showering or swimming. This can be done by using ear plugs or cotton wool covered in vaseline. Before going swimming check with your doctor or nurse that swimming will not harm your ears.
- Do not use cotton buds, hairgrips, matches etc., to clean or dry your ears. These damage the delicate lining of your ear canal and may even perforate your ear drum.
- Do not scratch your ears as this may spread infection.
- If you suffer from excessive wax, regular use of olive oil can help the ear clean itself. For details, please see your nurse or doctor.
- If you are to have your ears syringed to remove excess wax, you must inform the nurse before she starts if you have a perforated ear drum.
- If your symptoms do not improve with treatment, or if they get worse, consult your nurse or doctor.
- Try to keep your ears dry at all times.

## Useful Contacts

**Royal National Institute for Deaf People**  
19 - 23 Featherstone Street, London, EC1Y 8SL  
Freephone: 0808 808 0123  
Textphone: 0808 808 9000  
Website: [www.rnid.org.uk](http://www.rnid.org.uk)

**The British Deaf Association  
Counselling Service**  
13 Wilson Pattern Street, Warrington, WA1 1PG  
Minicom: 01925 652529  
Videophone: 01925 630169  
Voicephone: 01925 652520  
Website: [www.bda.org.uk](http://www.bda.org.uk)

**British Tinnitus Association**  
Ground Floor, Unit 5 Acorn Business Park,  
Woodseats Close, Sheffield, S8 0TB  
Freephone: 0800 018 0527  
Minicom: 0114 250 5694  
Website: [www.tinnitus.org.uk](http://www.tinnitus.org.uk)

**Deafness Research UK**  
330/332 Gray's Inn Road, London, WC1X 8EE  
Freephone: 0808 808 2222  
Textphone: 020 7915 1412  
Website: [defeatingdeafness.org](http://defeatingdeafness.org)

## Otitis Externa

### Useful Advice & Information



## What is Otitis Externa?

- Otitis Externa is a common condition which affects people of all ages.
- Otitis Externa is inflammation of the skin in the ear canal or of the pinna (the ear itself).
- Otitis Externa is caused by a bacterial infection in the ear canal or a more generalised skin problem such as eczema.

## What are the Symptoms?

- Patients who have Otitis Externa may suffer from:

### Itching of the Ear

This is common for most people. Because of the itching people have a tendency to relieve the discomfort by inserting objects into the ear. This action can cause the condition to worsen by creating tiny breaks in the skin, in which bacteria can enter, therefore causing inflammation.

### Pain Within the Ear

Usually only exists with severe Otitis Externa.

## Discharge

Discharge is common. This may be associated with crusting on the pinna; the part of the ear that is outside our bodies.

## Loss of Hearing

Loss of hearing sometimes occurs due to the closure of the ear canal, as a result of inflammation. This is easily reversed with successful treatment.

## Diagnosis

A doctor will look inside your ear, for inflammation. The doctor should be informed of any allergies, particularly skin allergies, as this could affect the treatment you are given.

## Treatments

- The treatment of Otitis Externa involves cleaning any infected debris from the ear.
- Otitis Externa can be a painful recurrent condition, especially if the predisposing factors are not removed.
- Treatment can involve topical antibiotic/steroids, this means placing the medication directly on to the infected area.
- In severe cases of Otitis Externa, a dressing can be placed on the ear and is left on for several days.

