

# SWIMMER'S EAR

Swimmer's Ear (otitis externa) is a painful inflammation of the outer ear canal that often occurs in kids who like to dive and swim underwater. Repeated dunkings wash the protective wax coating of the ear canal away, leaving the sensitive skin underneath vulnerable to infection. Ponds and lakes, because of high bacteria and fungal counts, are often the worst offenders. To PREVENT swimmers' ear, try mixing a solution of 1/2 rubbing alcohol and 1/2 white vinegar and putting a few drops in each ear at the end of a swim day. This helps dry out the ear canal and restore the normal acidity. You can also purchase "Swim-Ear" drops over-the-counter for the same purpose. If your child has persistent ear pain, particularly with movement of the outer ear, she will need to be seen for prescription ear drops.

To read more about swimmer's ear, visit [pediatrics.about.com](http://pediatrics.about.com)