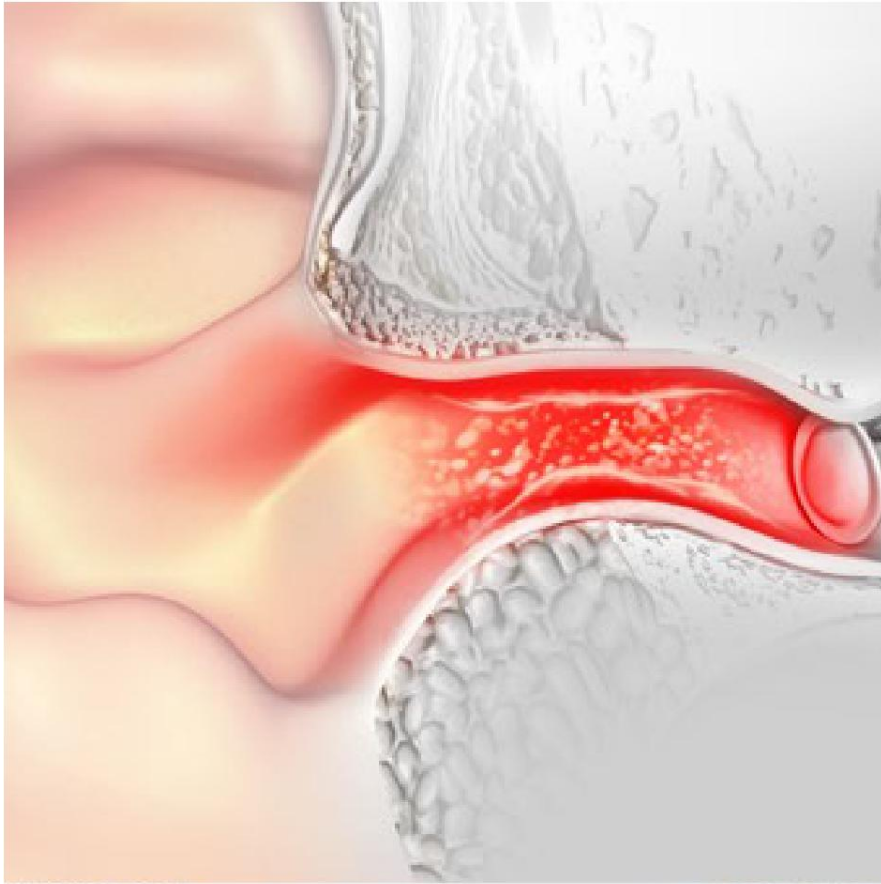




Swimmer's Ear (Otitis Externa)



Overview

This is an inflammation, irritation or infection of your ear. It can affect the ear canal and the outer part of your ear. Swimmer's ear is most common in teens and young adults. It can be a short-term problem, or something that keeps coming back.

Causes

What causes swimmer's ear? Well, often it's linked to a bacterial or fungal infection. Germs can infect your ear if you swim in unclean water. You can get an infection if you damage the skin of your ear in some way. Scratching your ear, cleaning your ear with cotton swabs, or getting something stuck in your ear can all lead to infection. Swimmer's ear is also caused by allergic reactions and chronic skin conditions.

Symptoms

Symptoms include redness, pain, and itching of the ear canal. Your ear may drain. The drainage may be thick and pus-like, with a yellow or green color. It may smell bad. And, you may have trouble hearing.

Treatment

Swimmer's ear is most often treated with antibiotic ear drops. You may need other medications, too. Your healthcare provider will create a plan that's right for you.

