

# OTITIS EXTERNA

## WHAT IS IT?

It is an infection of the skin ear canal. It is a common condition, which affects all ages but is rare in children.

## WHAT CAUSES IT?

It is caused by increased moisture and warmth in the ear canal. It can affect people who swim a lot, people who live in hot climates and by inserting objects such as cotton buds etc. into the ear canal.

This results in breaking the skin of the ear canal so allowing bacteria to enter the body.

It can also affect people who suffer from the skin disorder eczema or psoriasis and it can also be more prevalent in the summer months.

## WHAT DOES IT FEEL AND LOOK LIKE?

### ITCHING OF THE EAR

Because of the itching people tend to relieve the pain by inserting objects into the ear but this can cause the condition to worsen by creating tiny breaks in the skin.

**PAIN** — Especially outside the ear when the ear is touched or pulled.

**DISCHARGE (Drainage)** — which can be yellow creamy or tan colour and can smell.



**ROYAL VICTORIA EYE AND EAR HOSPITAL**

**ADELAIDE ROAD,**

**DUBLIN 2**

**EAR NOSE THROAT DEPARTMENT**

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## *Information Leaflet*

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**LOSS OF HEARING** — This can occur due to swelling and shedding of the ear canal but it is easily reversed with successful treatment.

**Diagnosis** — The Doctor will look inside your ear and he/she will decide on the treatment needed.

## HOW IS IT TREATED?

The doctor will take a swab from your ear and then gently clean out your ear.

The infection may be treated in different ways Antibiotic or steroid drops.

Or a dressing with antibiotic ointment may be placed in your ear and is left in place for a few days.

You may also be given a prescription for painkillers if you need them.

