Otitis Externa

Description
Otitis Externa is an inflammation or infection of the ear canal that extends from the eardrum to the outside of the ear.

Causes
- Bacterial or fungal infection in the skin lining the ear canal, or trauma to the ear canal.

Risk Factors
- Swimming in chlorinated pools may dry out the ear canal allowing bacteria or fungi to enter skin
- Excessive moisture from any cause
- Irritation from swabs, metal objects, bobby pins, ear plugs
- Prior ear infections

Expected Outcome
- Frequent signs and symptoms:
  - Ear pain that worsens when earlobe pulled
  - Persistent itching in ear
  - Occasionally fever
  - Discharge or pus from the ear
  - Temporary hearing loss

Medication
- Tylenol, Aspirin, Ibuprofen for pain and fever may be prescribed
- Ear drops that contain antibiotics and cortisone to control inflammation and fight infection may be prescribed
- For unusual fungal/bacterial infections other medications may be used.

Activity
- Avoid getting water in ear for 3 weeks after all symptoms disappear

Preventive Measures
- Don’t clean ears with any object or chemicals

For questions or concerns, call the Telephone Care Program
1-800-455-0057