What Is Swimmer's Ear?
Swimmer's ear is an infection of the ear canal. If you stick your finger in your ear, you're feeling a little of the ear canal. But if you have swimmer's ear, and you stick your finger in your ear — OW!

How Does Swimmer's Ear Happen?
Swimmer's ear - also called *otitis externa* (say: o-TY-tus ek-STUR-nuh) is different from a regular ear infection. Usually, when people say a child has an ear infection, they mean *otitis media* (say: ME-dee-uh), an infection of the middle ear. This sometimes happens when a child gets a cold.

Swimmer's ear happens when bacteria grow in the ear canal. Bacteria grows in water that stays in the ear canal. A lot of swimming, sweating and perspiring can lead to these wet conditions in the ear canal. Bacteria grow and the ear canal gets red and swollen. Swimmer's ear can be caused by a scratch or other irritation to the ear canal.

If someone has a big problem with swimmer's ear or is someone who is always in the water, the doctor may suggest ways for you to protect yourself.

1. **Keep your ears dry.** Dry your outer ears thoroughly with soft cloth. Tip your head to the side to help water drain from your ear canal. You can dry your ears with a blow dryer if you put it on the lowest setting, and hold it at least a foot away from the ear.

2. **Avoid putting foreign objects in your ear.** Never attempt to scratch an itch or dig out earwax with items such as a cotton swab, paper clip or hairpin. They can break skin and cause an infection.

3. **Protect your ears from irritants.** Put cotton balls in your ears while applying products such as hair sprays and hair dyes.

4. **At-home preventive treatment.** An easy and inexpensive eardrop solution can be made by mixing equal parts of rubbing alcohol and white vinegar (50:50 mixture). This solution will increase the rate of evaporation of water in the ear canal and has antibacterial properties. Using this solution to rinse the ear before and after water exposure can serve as a protective measure against infection.
If your hearing aid, cochlear implant or bone-anchored hearing aid gets wet

DON’T PANIC!

Electronics and water are two things that generally don’t go well together but all is not lost if your amplification does get a soaking. Many people have accidentally waterlogged their devices and have managed to get them working fully again.

What to do if it gets wet

1. **Remove it from the water as quickly as possible** – the less water that’s in it, the better chance it has to work again.

2. **Turn it off right away and remove the battery.** Dry the battery with a clean cloth.

3. **Make sure battery door is open.** Shake it gently to try and get as much water out as possible.

4. **Excessive heat is much worse for electronics** than a brief dunk in water. Avoid using hair dryer or heat lamp of any kind.

5. **Leave the aid to dry out.** Place it in a dehumidifier or dri-aid kit with battery door open over night.

6. **Try it out to see if it works.**

7. **If the aid still does not work** then you can either recharge your dri-aid kit and leave it a while longer or ask your audiologist to send it back for repair.

Above are examples of dri-aid or dehumidifiers for hearing devices.

In case of Extreme Emergency!

In case of emergency and you do not have your dri-aid kit or dehumidifier box, you can place the device over night in a plastic bag. Be sure no rice can get into the battery area.
Summer Care of Devices

In order to avoid a costly repair, here are some tips for keeping devices in shape and the sounds of summer loud and clear:

- When near water, remove devices and store them in an air tight container such as a dry aid jar.
- At the end of every day this summer, place your devices in a drying jar or box overnight.
- Avoid getting sweat from entering devices. Use accessories such as ear gear or super seals for hearing aids and aqua accessories for cochlear implants.
- Watch for moisture in tubing of hearing aids. It should be taken care of with an ear mold blower to push out the water droplets.
- Keep out of sunlight or extreme heat. Do NOT leave devices or batteries in the car.
- Don’t forget to protect the top of ears with sun lotion BUT NOT on the devices. One drop on a microphone can damage the device.
- Due to increased sweat, water and grime from all kinds of fun outdoor summer activities, the microphone protectors or filters may need to be changed more frequently than other times of the year.
- For storage of devices while not wearing them, consider using a waterproof bag for cell phones and other electronics such as LokSak. Double bagged ziplock bags also works.
- For fun on wild rides, take precautions to make sure not to lose the device. Wear headbands or bandanas to cover devices or use string or cord with a safety pin (alligator clip) to secure devices on clothing. For cochlear implants, add ear molds or clip the wire onto your hair. Better yet, give the devices to a person in the group who is not going on the ride.