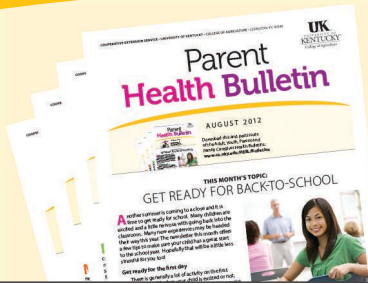


Parent Health Bulletin



JUNE 2014

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THIS MONTH'S TOPIC:

WATCH OUT FOR SWIMMER'S EAR

Does your child love to swim in the summer? Wearing sunscreen is very important, but sunburn is not the only cause of discomfort for swimmers. If your children are in the water for an extended period of time, they may get swimmer's ear. Swimmer's ear is an infection in the ear and will need to be treated by a healthcare provider.

The formal name for swimmer's ear is otitis externa. It is an infection in the outer part of the ear canal. Children who have been swimming during the past few days and are complaining of any of the following symptoms should see a healthcare provider:

- ear feels itchy
- ear is red and swollen
- child feels pain when the ear is tugged on
- child feels pain when pressure is placed on the ear
- infection coming from the ear canal

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Every year there are nearly 2.4 million visits to healthcare providers for swimmer's ear.



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How does someone get swimmer's ear?

Swimmer's ear is often caused when water stays in the ear canal for a long period of time. Germs are in the water at pools and other places where people swim and the ear canal is a great place for germs to grow. If your child complains of a painful ear, you should take him to a healthcare provider. You may need to get some special ear drops.

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The good news is that swimmer's ear cannot be passed from one person to another.

There are ways that you and your family can prevent swimmer's ear:

- keep the ears as dry as possible
- dry the ears after showering or swimming
 - use your towel to dry your ears
 - tilt your head so that your ear is facing the ground to allow the water to drain
 - pull on your ear lobe a little to help get the water out
- do NOT put objects in your ear canal

Swimming is a great summertime activity. Help prevent swimmer's ear so your children can enjoy the water.

REFERENCES:

- Nemours KidsHealth. Swimmer's Ear http://kidshealth.org/kid/ill_injure/aches/swimmers_ear.html
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "Swimmer's Ear (Otitis Externa). <http://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/rwi/illnesses/swimmers-ear.html>

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