



# UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND UNIVERSITY HEALTH CENTER

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## Ear Infections

### Ear infections can be an inflammation located:

- In the ear canal, outside the eardrum
- Inside the inner ear
- or both

### Ear canal inflammation is:

- Caused by bacteria
- Frequently caused by swimming, showering or hair washing

#### Symptoms:

- Pain or itching
- Swelling
- Occasional discharge
- Sometimes decreased hearing

#### Treatment:

- Prescription ear drops
- Aspirin, Advil or Tylenol for pain control
- Heat applied to the outer ear
- Ear wash (done by practitioner)

#### Prevention:

- Do not stick Q-tips, bobby pins, etc., in the ear canal
- Keep ear canal dry when swimming  
(use earplugs or after-swimming use ear-drying preparations)

### Middle Ear Inflammation is:

- Caused by bacteria or virus trapped in the middle ear cavity
- Usually starts as a nose or throat infection, or allergies

#### Symptoms:

- Eardrum redness and swelling
- Pain
- Feeling of fullness in ear
- Occasional ringing or dizziness
- Occasional fever
- Symptoms will worsen with flying, so see a health care provider before flying

#### Treatment:

- Antibiotics
- Decongestants or antihistamines (such as Sudafed or Benadryl)
- Aspirin, Advil, or Tylenol for pain
- Avoid forceful blowing of your nose

#### Prevention Includes:

- Taking a decongestant or antihistamine at the earliest sign of a cold
- Avoid scuba diving when symptoms of a cold or allergy are present

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