

Otorrhea

What is Otorrhea?

Discharge from the external ear. Both infection and trauma cause ear drainage. The ear must be cleaned meticulously in order to permit adequate inspection and evaluation of the eardrum and middle ear. Mastoid x-rays may be needed to rule out associated middle ear or mastoid disease. Impedance audiometry (tympanogram) may help in this determination also.

Causes of Otorrhea?

The most common causes:

Liquid low-viscosity cerumen Otitis
Externa (swimmer's ear)
Eczematoid dermatitis

Other common causes:

Psoriasis
Neurodermatitis
Basal cell carcinoma
Purulent Otorrhea from middle ear disease
Foreign body (children)
Furunculosis of ear canal
Previous mastoid or middle ear surgery
Candida (yeast otitis externa)

Uncommon causes:

Herpes zoster oticus
Myringitis bullosa
Malignant otitis externa (pseudomonas infections in diabetes)
Otomycosis (true fungus, not Candida)
Radiation therapy to the cranial area
Squamous cell carcinoma
Old temporal bone trauma or surgery with CSF Otorrhea
Impacted keratosis of ear canal