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