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Causes of Itchy Ears

Ear canal skin is very sensitive. The slightest accumulation of debris, even a dead hair, may be felt as an itching sensation.

Dry Ears are Itchy

A normal ear has a thin layer of natural body oil. Some ears produce no ear wax which results in dry and itchy ear skin. Sometimes people compulsively clean their ears and dry them out by removing the natural wax. Dry ears tend to accumulate flakes of dry dead skin. For people who just lack ear wax, occasional insertion of a few drops of mineral or vegetable oil can be helpful. This is best done at bedtime, with a drop or two placed with a medicine dropper. For people who compulsively clean out their ears, we advise scheduled appointments for ear cleaning, usually every 6 months, and avoidance of use of q tips, or similar instruments in between.

Hearing Aids Causing Itching of the Ear

When hearing aid users get water in their ears, the hearing aids can trap the water causing irritation. Keeping the external ear free of water is advisable.

Rarely the plastic of a hearing aid or polish on the surface of the plastic will cause an allergic reaction in the ears of the wearer. The polish can be removed or the hearing aid mold plastic changed. Hearing aids may have a bump which puts pressure on the ear canal. This can be irritating and cause itching. The solution here is to have the hearing aid mold revised.

Skin Problems in the Ear

Skin diseases such as allergic dermatitis, psoriasis, eczema, seborrheic dermatitis can cause itching in the ear just as they do elsewhere.

Outer Ear Infections

When the skin of the ear gets scratched from and injury or aggressive cleaning, it will weep a fluid rich in protein. This protein, kept at body temperature in the darkness of the ear canal can become a culture that grows bacteria, yeast and fungus. Water aggravates the problem leading to a condition called Swimmer's Ear. Oral antibiotics are of little use in this condition. Acidic ear drops, or even a simple solution of vinegar and water (50/50) can often stop the infection. Sometimes the ear fills with debris from the infection and needs to be professionally cleaned before the drops can be effective.

Psychological disturbances causing ear itching:

Sometimes people get very nervous and start to scratch themselves. This can also occur in the ear. This is likely an amplification of normal sensation that the person would otherwise ignore.