



Care for Your Childs Ears

With the weather warming up and the swimming season well under way I need to bring to your attention the need for some preventative measures in relation to “Otitis Externa”, which is the clinical name for “outer ear infection”.

During the warmer months, especially if your child is in the water, the weather is humid and they start to perspire the outer ear canal may have difficulty drying out. It is in this moist warm condition (body temperature) in the outer ear canal that bacteria/fungus can start to grow. If you have a pool at home or increase the amount of time your child is in the water then the problem is exacerbated. Fortunately it is a relatively simple matter to help prevent this problem occurring. Most chemist shops have products “Aqua Ear”, for one, the drops from which you can place in your child’s ear after each swim, shower or even extended periods of exercise, to help dry out the child’s outer ear canal.

In 1964 a chronic ear infection “Otitis Externa” severely disrupted my preparation for the Tokyo Olympics. As I could not afford the time out of the water the infection did not have a chance to clear up, so it was a visit to the ear specialist every other day to pack the ear and try to prevent the infection worsening. After the Olympic trials in Sydney were over I was referred to a Dr. Quail Snr in Wickham Tce., who treated the infection successfully with some anti-biotic powder. The point I am leading up to here is this; he told me that, once the infection was totally healed, then every time I got out from a swim I needed to dry my ear canal out. He recommended straight methylated spirits. From 1964 until today I have always filled each ear canal up with surgical methylated spirits and have never had “Otitis Externa” again. During the three decades I coached swimming any of my swimmers who were diligent with the application of the spirit drops also were free from infection.

I am not recommending you place straight methylated spirits in your child ear; however I am suggesting you visit your local chemist, talk to the pharmacists about a product he would recommend that will help keep your child’s outer ear canal dry. In this case the old adage prevention is better than cure is a good way to prevent your child going through the agony of an outer ear infection.

— Chris Shapland

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Chris Shapland

Head Office: (07) 3284 1444

Mobile: 0414 273 497

www.shapswim.com.au