



# Chronic Otitis Media

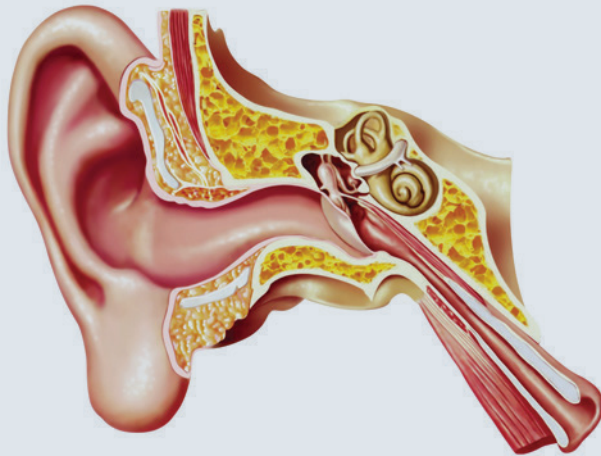
The Department of Ear, Nose & Throat (ENT) - Head & Neck Surgery provides a wide range of surgical services for adult patients with ENT, head and neck diseases. Patients are referred from polyclinics, general practitioners, emergency services or transferred from other departments within the Ng Teng Fong General Hospital or other healthcare facilities, including nursing homes, community and other hospitals. Our team of highly-trained ENT-Head & Neck surgeons and allied healthcare professionals aim to provide the best possible care to our patients.



## What does a healthy ear do?

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The normal ear is divided into three parts: external ear canal, middle ear and inner ear. The funnel-shaped external channels sound waves onto the eardrum. The sound is then amplified by the three ossicles or bones within the middle ear. The inner ear is then stimulated to send electrical impulses to the brain. Any break within this chain results in hearing loss.

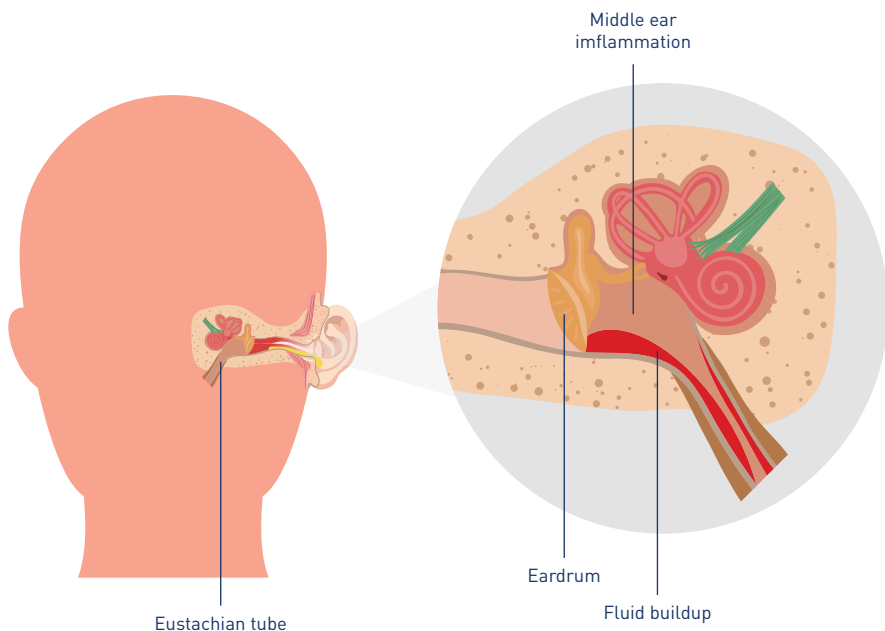


Anatomy of the ear

# What is chronic otitis media?

A chronic ear infection may result from an acute ear infection that does not clear completely or from recurrent ear infections. The infection may spread from the middle ear to the mastoid bone (mastoiditis). The pressure from pus within the middle ear may rupture the eardrum and erode the middle ear structures. Chronic ear infections are more destructive than acute infections as they are prolonged or repeated.

Repeated infections result in frequent, foul-smelling discharge from the perforation in the eardrum. Each infection causes further damage to the ossicles and inner ear to result in further hearing loss. Infections that are untreated can sometimes cause severe infections of the brain or the inner ear.



# What are the treatment options?

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## Self-help remedies

- Keep your ear dry when you shower. You can put cotton wool at the opening of the ear and use Vaseline cream for further waterproofing.
- Avoid swimming. See your doctor for ear drops whenever you have an active infection.

## Surgery

- Your surgeon will advise surgery if you have:
  - Hearing loss due to a large perforation
  - Hearing loss due to damaged or fixed ossicles
  - Recurrent infection due to contamination through the eardrum perforation
  - The inability to bathe or swim safely due to the perforation

- **Tympanoplasty**

This is a surgery where your own tissue is placed across the perforation to help to heal the eardrum. The ossicles are repaired if needed. The incision is usually hidden behind the ear. The surgery takes one hour. You should be able to go home on the same day with a turban bandage dressing.



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