

EXTERNAL EAR ALLERGY

The external ear may be exposed to a variety of chemicals, frequently self-applied to the ear bowl or the external canal. Substances include cosmetics, across-the-counter ear wax agents, antiseptics or antibiotics. Some may excite an allergic reaction or hypersensitivity, particularly after repeated applications. Previously, antibiotics such as penicillin or chloramphenicol were notorious, but these are now seldom used. Agents such as iodine antiseptics remain more common and must be avoided during surgery or as wound/infection care around the ear in susceptible individuals.



External Ear Allergy: Antibiotic drops are a common cause

Characteristics ([Allergic Otitis Externa](#))

The more florid examples are often antibiotics. The use of ear drops for a preceding external ear infection is commonly related. Their application may be followed by considerable discomfort or even substantial pain. Marked swelling of the canal, ear bowl and pinna are present, and the skin surrounding the ear becomes reddened and diffusely thickened. Copious weeping of watery fluid may occur, and severe itch is present. The situation may persist until the possibility of allergy is recognised.

Nickel is also a common irritant, being a normal component of costume jewellery. It usually manifests as redness around the offending article, such as pierced earrings. The item should be removed and steroid ointment applied; this usually solves the immediate problem. Replace with jewellery made of noble metals (gold, silver, platinum).

"Silverton Place"

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Other Locations

Beenleigh

Sunnybank

Mt Ommaney

Caboolture

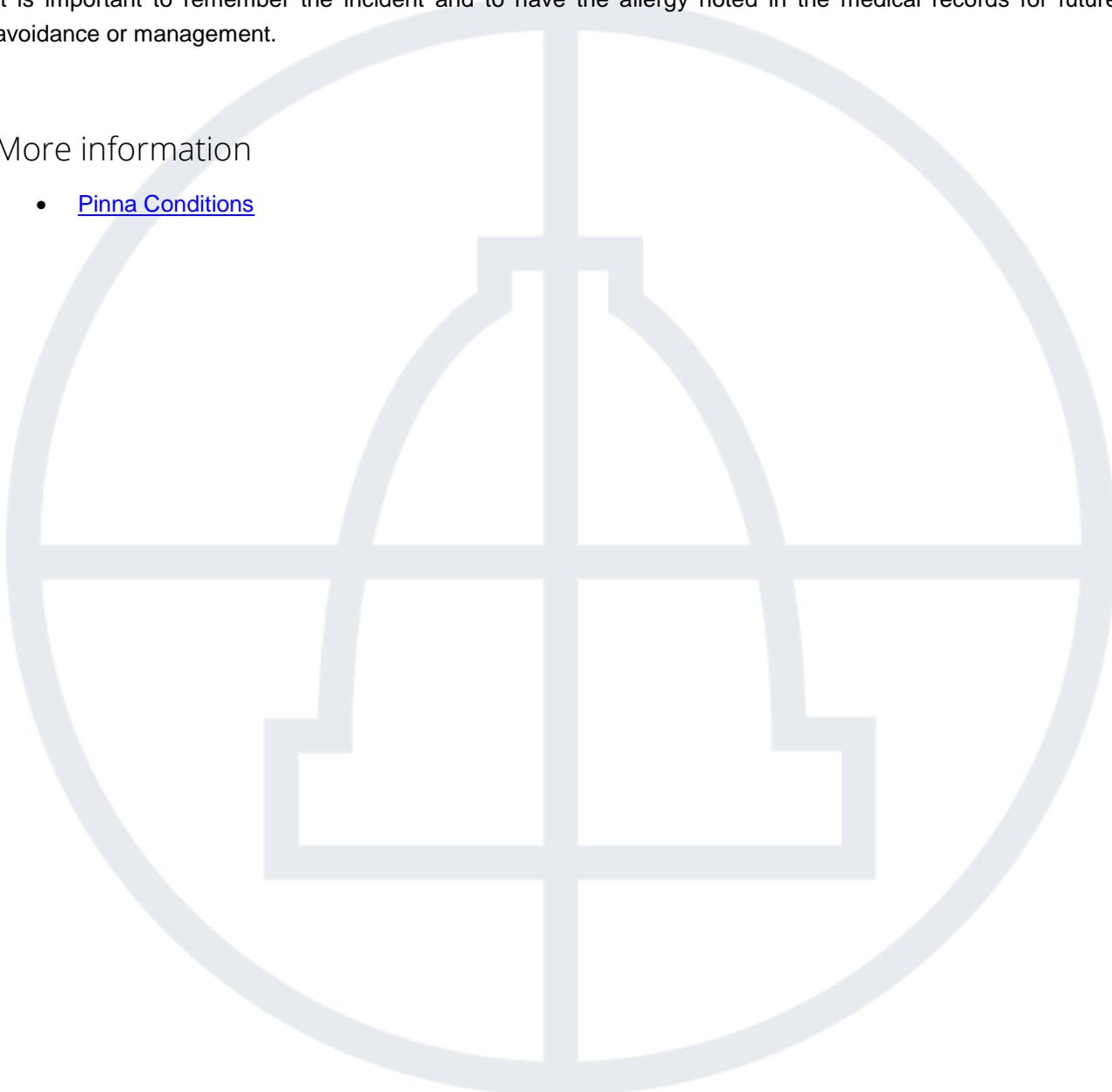
Treatment

If possible, the offending agent is identified and its use discontinued. Thorough cleaning with plain water removes residue and discharge; avoid chemicals that may worsen the problem. The ear and canal are then managed with a lavish application of steroid ointment that is effective in settling the tissues overnight in the absence of secondary infection.

It is important to remember the incident and to have the allergy noted in the medical records for future avoidance or management.

More information

- [Pinna Conditions](#)



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