Patient with discharging ear green, yellow fluid eliminating from the ear canal

Does the patient have acute symptoms of otitis externa:
- itch
- non-mucoid discharge
- hearing loss

Is it acute otitis media?
- Treat according to other guidelines, such as SIGN 66
- Refer to ENT 01225 428331

Is it chronic suppurative otitis media?
- i.e., persistent mucoid discharge, with or without deafness
- Topical antibiotic and steroid drops
- Refer to nurse practitioner ear care clinic

2 week course of topical antibiotic/steroid drops and review

Symptoms resolve?
- Yes
  - Continue self management
  - Refer to ENT with the following information:
    - Patient history
    - Treatments tried:
      - duration, side effects, response
    - Results of any investigations
  - Discharge from clinic with specific management plan

No
- If symptoms do not clear
  - Consider alternative diagnosis
  - 2 week course of topical antibiotic/steroid drops and review
  - If severe pain/cellulitis

Note:
Aminoglycoside ear drops may in theory be ototoxic in the presence of a nonintact tympanic membrane, but in general are safe to use for up to 2 weeks in the presence of definite infection. However, aminoglycoside ear drops are not recommended in the better or only hearing ear in patients with pre-existing hearing loss. Consider ofloxacin drops as an alternative (unlicensed indication).