

Ear Infections

(Otitis Media)

An ear infection is an infection of the middle ear (behind the ear drum), usually occurring with a cold. Most children (74%) will develop at least one of these, and many will have repeated ones.

The symptoms of an ear infection in infants are usually poor feeding, fussiness, ear pulling and only sometimes fever. A cold is almost always present first. In older children, ear pain will be most prominent. Symptoms may vary in each child, and sometimes no symptoms at all will be observed.

Treatment:

1. All ear infections or suspected ear infections need to be seen in order to rule out a ruptured ear drum, rule out another disease, and to document the diagnosis.
2. If an ear infection is present, your child may receive an antibiotic, which should be given as directed. If the medicine is a liquid, it usually needs to be stored in the refrigerator and shaken well. Most of these liquids are only good for a few weeks; therefore, discard the leftovers.
3. There are three good methods to relieve the pain - especially if occurring at night:
 - a. A pain reliever, such as Tylenol.
 - b. Warmth to the ear, (heating pad, wash cloth).
 - c. Auralgan drops (Rx), 2 - 3 drops to the ear and cover with a cotton ball.
4. Chronic ear infections are treated with various, and sometimes prolonged antibiotics. Ear tubes are only used as a last resort.

No restrictions exist. The ears need not be covered. Swimming is allowed provided no perforation or drainage exists. Your child can return to school or daycare when feeling better.