

Ear Infections and Children

When fluid becomes trapped in the inner ear it causes an ear infection. This can happen after a cold, flu or respiratory infection. Many children have ear infections more than once, and fluid can stay in your child's ear for 2-3 months after the infection. Untreated ear infections can lead to serious complications such as hearing loss.

Symptoms

Not all children have the same symptoms. If you are wondering if your child has an ear infection, look for a combination of these symptoms.

- Pulling on the ear
- Pain in the ear, or ears feel like they are ringing
- Had a fever or cold within the last week
- Starts to speak later than other children
- Behavioral problems, irritable or cranky
- Trouble balancing or feeling dizzy
- Trouble speaking, hearing, or paying attention
- Inability to sleep

Treatment

Homecare

- Talk to your health care provider about which medicines you should use.
- **Do not give your child aspirin** unless your health care provider okays it.
- A warm, not hot, heating pad held over the ear can help relieve the earache.
- Ear drops to relieve pain can sometimes be used. Ask your health care provider which drops to use.

Antibiotics

- An antibiotic may be used if an ear infection is caused by bacteria. Antibiotics do not work for infections caused by viruses.
- Your healthcare provider can tell you when an antibiotic as needed.

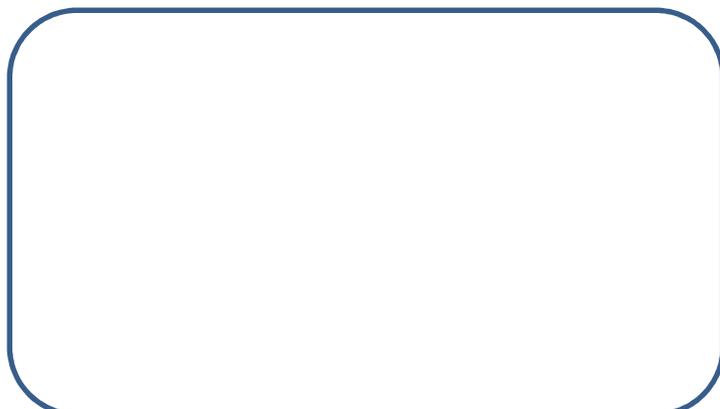
Prevention

- Washing your hands and washing their hands frequently
- Breast feeding your child when they are a baby
- Holding your baby at an angle instead of horizontally when you breast feed or bottle feed
- Weaning your child off their pacifier by 6 months of age
- Not smoking around your child
- Getting appropriate vaccinations for you and your child. Ask your health care provider for more information about vaccines.

Used with permission from the Community Health Association of Mountain/Plains States (CHAMPS)

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