



Kapa'a Pediatrics, LLC

Otitis Media

Otitis media, also known as an inner or middle ear infection, is an inflammation of the middle ear usually caused by an infection. It is one of the most common childhood illnesses. This occurs when fluid becomes trapped and builds up behind the eardrum in the eustachian tube (tube between eardrum and nose), causing pain in the affected ear. Fluid in the middle ear and sinus area is often from a viral infection (common cold), if bacteria starts to travel from the mouth and nose into the middle ear fluid it can cause a problem. This often occurs three to five days into a common cold.

Risk Factors:

- Children who attend childcare centers (frequently get common colds)
- Children who are not vaccinated (vaccines protect against Haemophilus influenza and Pneumococcal pneumoniae, bacteria that commonly cause ear infections)
- Infants who formula feed. Especially if they take a bottle to go to bed at night and naps
- Children with large adenoids or tonsils
- Children with allergies
- Exposure to tobacco smoke

Symptoms:

- Complaints of ear pain (in older children)
- Pulling or tugging at the ear
- Irritability
- Fever
- Fluid draining from the ear (when eardrum ruptures from pressure inside)
- Difficulty hearing (sometimes sounds like you are under water)
- Problems with balance and coordination

Diagnosis and Treatment:

Diagnosis will be made by looking into the affected ear to evaluate the eardrum.

- Older kids can often clear the infection with common mechanical techniques and rarely need antibiotics. Chewing gum, lightly clearing (popping) ears to wiggle the eardrum, blowing nose regularly, steamy showers, and nasal rinses can help the eustachian tube mucus drain through the nose. This will alleviate the ear pain and resolve the infection.
- Infants and younger kids generally have a harder time with these infections due to their anatomy, as the mucus has a harder time draining through the eustachian tube. Sometimes antibiotics will be used to help stop the infection from progressing to a more severe infection.
- Ibuprofen is best to help with ear pain if child is older than 6 months.

*** Patient handouts created by Kapa'a Pediatrics are intended to give parents the most common and pertinent facts about a certain issue. If there is ever any concern that your child was given an incorrect diagnosis or is not following the usual expected course for an illness please call us to speak with a physician. (808) 634-8011***