

Earaches

Earaches in children are common. They can be caused by fluid behind the eardrum, an infection in the middle part of the ear, or an infection in the ear canal (also known as swimmer's ear). Kids under 5 are at risk for ear infections, especially after upper respiratory infections.



Signs and Symptoms

- ear pain (especially when chewing, sucking, or lying down)
- redness or swelling of the eardrum or outer ear
- pulling or rubbing the ears
- leakage from the ear
- difficulty hearing
- ear fullness or popping
- fussiness
- vomiting
- headache
- fever



What to Do

- Call the doctor to have the child's ears checked.
- Give acetaminophen or ibuprofen as needed to relieve pain (check instructions carefully for correct amount).
- If an antibiotic is prescribed, make sure the child finishes all of the medicine as instructed.

Seek Medical Care if:

- the child appears ill while on antibiotics
- the ear drains pus-like fluid or blood
- the ear pain worsens
- there is swelling and redness behind the ear
- the ear begins to stick out from the side of the head



Think Prevention!

- Make sure kids get the pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV) and the flu vaccine, which may reduce their odds of getting middle ear infections.
- Do not clean ears with cotton swabs or sharp objects.
- Avoid secondhand smoke and anyone with a cold (both can increase the frequency of ear infections).
- Make sure kids get in the habit of washing their hands, especially after playing around other kids.
- Don't give a bottle when your baby is lying down.
- Ask the doctor if removable earplugs and alcohol eardrops are a good idea for a child who swims a lot.

Notes from the Nurse: _____
