

Frequently Asked Questions about Otitis Media

1) Q: What is Otitis Media?

A: This is the common term for most “ear infections”. It simply means



there is inflammation behind the ear drum.

2) Q: How do I know my child has an ear infection?

A: Ear pain, fever, and decreased hearing are common. Infants and Toddlers may also have sleeping difficulty, ear tugging, and fussiness. Sometimes, no symptoms are present.

3) Q: Why do kids get repeat infections?

A: While antibiotics get rid of the infection, the fluid behind the ear-drum remains. If the child is unable to clear the fluid on their own, it is prone to getting infected again after the antibiotics are completed.

4) Q: How do you treat otitis media?

A: Usually antibiotics are given to treat the infection. If ear infections are frequently recurring, then ear tube placement may be considered.

5) Q: Why do kids get so many ear infections compared to adults?

A: The natural ventilation shaft of the ear does not work as well in kids. This tube matures early in life but meanwhile, infections are more common.

6) Q: What other factors may cause ear infections?

A: Pacifier use, daycare settings, and uncontrolled acid reflux are other factors that increase the frequency of ear infections in children.

7) Q: What are ear tubes and how do they help?

A: They are tubes that are placed in a small cut in the ear drum to ventilate the space behind the ear drum externally at a time the child can't ventilate this space naturally. This prevents fluid from building up.



8) Q: Does my child need ear tubes?

A: If your child has gotten many ear infections over the course of the year, or several back-to-back infections, constant ear fluid, or hearing loss, then it can be considered by your doctor.

9) Q: Is my child going to have long term hearing problems because of ear infections?

A: This is difficult to predict for any one child, but if ear infections or fluid are not treated, a child is more likely to have long term complications.

10) Q: Do ear infections run in families?

A: Yes. Ear infections may be hereditary.

11) Q: What can be done to reduce the risk of ear infections?

A: Avoiding daycare settings and cigarette smoke exposure. If your child has acid reflux or allergies, these conditions may also cause more frequent ear infections.