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## EAR INFECTIONS

Ear infections are very common childhood illnesses. Most children will have at least one ear infection and some get infections so frequently that they may be referred to an ear specialist.

### **OTITIS MEDIA (Middle ear infection)**

This condition is often a complication of a cold, and can occur when a cold causes swelling and blockage of the tube behind the eardrum, causing fluid to build up in the middle ear and become infected.

#### **Symptoms include:**

Ear pain	Fever	Pulling at the ears
Fussiness	Poor feeding	Difficulty sleeping
Difficulty hearing	Drainage from the ear	

#### **Treatment includes:**

Ear infections are usually treated with antibiotics. Many infections will improve even without antibiotics, so your doctor, depending on the history and the exam, may hold off on antibiotics for a couple days to see if your child improves. If your doctor does prescribe antibiotics, give the medicine to your child exactly as directed. If your child has ear tubes, antibiotic ear drops may be prescribed.

Acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil / Motrin) for fever or for pain.

Give your child plenty of liquids.

Follow up for an ear recheck as directed by your doctor

#### **Call our office if:**

Your child still has fever or ear pains 48 hours after antibiotics have started

Your child appears to be getting worse in any.

Your child develops redness or swelling of the skin that is behind the ear.

### **OTITIS EXTERNA (Swimmer's Ear)**

This is an infection of the skin of the ear canal that can be triggered by excess water in the ear canal.

#### **Symptoms include:**

Ear pains with touch or movement of the ear	Drainage from the ear
Swelling or redness of the ear	Fever

#### **Treatment includes:**

Antibiotic ear drops. Use as directed by your doctor. Sometimes, an ear wick may be placed in the ear to help keep the antibiotic in contact with the ear canal. The wick should fall out on its own in a few days.

Give acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Motrin / Advil) as needed for pains.

Minimize getting water in the ears (avoid swimming, baths).

#### **Call our office if:**

Your child develops worsening ear pains despite the antibiotic drops, or is not improving after 2-3 days of the drops.

Your child develops redness or swelling of the skin that is behind the ear.

**For any urgent or emergent medical concerns, please call 911 or go immediately to the nearest emergency department.**