

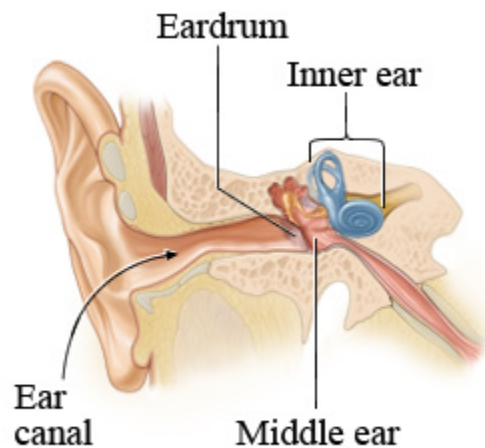


CARE INSTRUCTIONS

KAISER PERMANENTE

Ear Infections (Otitis Media): After Your Child's Visit

Your Kaiser Permanente Care Instructions



An ear infection is an infection behind the eardrum. The most frequent kind of ear infection in children—otitis media—usually starts out with a cold. Ear infections can hurt a lot. Children with ear infections often fuss and cry, pull at their ears, and sleep poorly.

Most children will have at least one ear infection. Fortunately, children usually outgrow them, often about the time they enter grade school.

Most ear infections clear up in a couple of days and may not need antibiotics. Antibiotics may be prescribed in some cases. Regular doses of pain medicine are the best way to reduce fever and help your child feel better.

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Follow-up care is a key part of your child's treatment and safety. Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if your child is having problems. It's also a good idea to know your child's test results and keep a list of the medicines your child takes.

How can you care for your child at home?

- Give acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) for fever, pain, or fussiness. Read and follow all instructions on the label. Do not give aspirin to anyone younger than 20. It has been linked to Reye syndrome, a serious illness.
- If the doctor prescribed antibiotics for your child, give them as directed. Do not stop using them just because your child feels better. Your child needs to take the full course of antibiotics.
- Place a warm washcloth or a heating pad next to your child's ear for pain. Put a thin cloth between the heating pad and your child's ear. Do not allow children to go to bed with a heating pad. They could get burned. Use a heating pad only if your child is old enough to tell you if it is getting too hot.
- Encourage rest. Resting will help the body fight the infection. Arrange for quiet play activities.

When should you call for help?

Call 911 anytime you think your child may need emergency care. For example, call if:

- Your child is confused, does not know where he or she is, or is extremely sleepy or hard to wake up.

Call your doctor now or seek immediate medical care if:

- Your child is still in severe pain several hours after taking pain medicine.
- Your child has a fever with a stiff neck or a severe headache.
- Your child cannot keep down medicine or fluids.
- Your child has signs of needing more fluids. These signs include sunken eyes with few tears, a dry mouth with little or no spit, and little or no urine for 8 or more hours.
- Your child has redness or swelling in the area of the scalp behind the ear.
- White, yellow, or bloody liquid (not wax) is coming from the ear.

Watch closely for changes in your child's health, and be sure to contact your doctor if:

- Your child still has pain or a fever after 2 days.
- Your child has any new symptoms, such as hearing problems after the ear infection has cleared.

Where can you learn more?

Go to <http://www.kp.org>

Enter J159 in the search box to learn more about **"Ear Infections (Otitis Media): After Your Child's Visit"**.

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