

MIDDLE EAR INFECTION (Otitis Media)



■ ■ ■ Description

Otitis media is a bacterial infection of the middle ear. It occurs most commonly in children under the age of 8 years, although anyone can get a middle ear infection. Acute otitis media usually begins with a viral infection such as the common cold. Inflammation of the nose and sinuses may block the tube connecting the ear with the throat. This sets up an opportunity for infection by bacteria, leading to symptoms.

■ ■ ■ Common Signs and Symptoms

- Earache
- Hearing loss, partial or complete
- Popping sensation in the ear
- Feeling of fullness in the ear
- Fever
- Dizziness
- Nausea
- Stomach pain
- Dripping from the nose that is yellow or green in color
- Sharp ear pain
- Fluid draining from the ear

■ ■ ■ Preventive Measures

See your doctor early for any signs of an upper respiratory illness.

■ ■ ■ General Treatment Considerations

Your physician will often prescribe antibiotics. Depending on the amount of congestion you have, your doctor may also give you medication to help clear the Eustachian tube and relieve some of the pressure in the middle ear. After 2 to 3 days on the antibiotics, you should feel better, but it is important to take the full course of antibiotics prescribed to prevent resistant bacteria from growing. Applying warm compresses to the area around your ear may help the pain. In cases of eardrum rupture, you need to protect the affected ear from water. You may be given ear drops to protect against infection. If the eardrum is not healing, you may need surgery to fix it to avoid permanent hearing loss. This is usually a simple procedure and may be done in a outpatient surgical facility. Usually a small hole will heal on its own in 3 weeks.

Notes:

(Up to 4400 characters only)

Notes and suggestions