



## Ear Infections in Kids

Many of us have gone through this in the past: We've taken our child to the pediatrician because they are obviously in pain, acting funny, or pulling at their ears, and the doc looked in their ears with the otoscope and said, "Yep, it's red. Little Johnny's got an ear infection. I'll write you a script for an antibiotic."

Think about that for a minute. How did the doctor know, just from the color of the tympanic membrane (eardrum), that your child had an infection? He didn't. The only way to truly diagnose an infection in the ear is by doing a swab of the ear and culturing the area. Then they can see for sure whether or not your child actually has an infection. If they don't do that, the problem more than likely is fluid buildup behind the eardrum, or the area may simply be irritated (red, swollen and/or painful) due to teething, because the ears are close to the gums and mouth and often react when this area is under stress.

Now, of course, if your child is running a raging fever and the side of her face and the ear is oozing a colorful pus, then yes, you could definitely say she has an infection. The reason for prescribing antibiotics without a true infection diagnosis is that if your child is having an underlying infection, the drug will take effect. But the less you have to medicate your child, the better, and if there's not an actual infection there are other options.

So what do you do if your child is fussy and having issues with one or both of their ears? Are there things you can do besides medication to help her feel better and help the fluid move out of the Eustachian tube? Absolutely. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that the best approach for an ear infection is to "watch and wait." They don't even recommend routine antibiotics for this condition, and say that most heal at the same rate whether you take meds or simply wait and do nothing.

So what the heck are you supposed to do if your child is not infected but has issues with too much fluid in her ears?



Photo Courtesy of Dr. Kevorkian

**Chiropractic Adjustments.** Lymph nodes need properly functioning muscles to contract with your baby's head movements in order to flush out the fluid and congestion that pools in the area. If the bones in the top of your baby's neck become restricted (due to birth or any other type of physical stressor), the muscles around that area cannot contract and work correctly. If the muscles don't contract perfectly, then the body has a hard time flushing out the fluid in the ear canals. Gentle adjustments to this area help to reduce spasms and re-establish normal motion to a restricted area, which offers tremendous relief when your child has too much fluid in her ears. Adjustments also boost the immune system and help the body to function optimally.

If your baby is exhibiting signs of a possible infection, or if they're not necessarily infected, but are having a lot of pain, there are additional things to do:

**Warm olive oil.** Taking a tablespoon and using steam over the stove, you can warm up some olive oil and then use either a medicine dropper or a cotton ball to drop the olive oil into the irritated ear. This helps to soothe the ear and reduce swelling.

**Colloidal Silver.** Putting colloidal silver in the ear will help to kill any bacteria congregating in the ear canal. Killing off these bacteria will help to reduce the swelling, which will help to reduce the overall pain.

## *Establishing and Advancing the Chiropractic Family Wellness Lifestyle*

### **Dietary Tips:**

**Eliminate or reduce sugar intake.** Sugar will reduce your child's immune system function, the exact opposite of what you want to happen.

**No caffeine.** Caffeine breaks down body tissue and harms the digestive tract, a huge part of the immune system. Drink more water.

**No dyes or artificial sweeteners.** These are potent neurotoxins and will limit either your or your child's body's ability to heal.

**Increase protein.** This will help to stabilize the blood sugar and speed up healing.

**Reduce or eliminate dairy products.** Dairy has naturally occurring sugars in it, and it causes the body to increase mucous production.

**Regulate gluten.** Gluten is a major allergenic food. If you haven't taken gluten out of your diet (if nursing) or your child's diet, consider doing so around this time.

**Increase vegetables.** You want as many "alive" foods in your system as you can to reduce inflammation in both your body and your baby's.

Hopefully the above will give you a few tools to use to help your child in the event of a supposed ear infection.

**-Jim Bob Haggerton, DC**

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Provided by *Pathways to Family Wellness* magazine, published by ICPA, Inc. For more information visit:

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