

Skeltons Chemists

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Opening Times

Monday to Friday - 8.30am - 5.30pm

Saturday - 8.30am - 3pm

Sundays & Bank Holidays - Closed

Your FREE Healthy Living Leaflet for May 2024

1. What is otitis media?
2. What are the symptoms of middle ear infection?
3. What are the symptoms in young children?
4. What causes middle ear infections?
5. Why are babies and young children more susceptible to middle ear infections?
6. When should I get medical advice?
7. What treatment is there for middle ear infections?
8. What is glue ear?
9. Can middle ear infections be prevented?
10. What is a perforated eardrum?



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Answers on the bottom of P2

What is otitis media?

It is an infection of the middle ear. It causes inflammation (redness and swelling) and a build up of fluid behind the eardrum. Anyone can develop a middle ear infection but they're most common in young children.

The symptoms include:

- Earache
- A high temperature
- Being sick
- A lack of energy
- Slight hearing loss - if the middle ear becomes filled with fluid.

In some cases, a hole may develop in the eardrum (perforated eardrum) and puss may run out of the ear. The earache which is caused by the build up of fluid stretching the eardrum, then resolves.

In young children and babies, the signs of an ear infection may also include:

- ♦ Rubbing or pulling at their ear

- ♦ Not reacting to some sounds
- ♦ Being irritable or restless
- ♦ Being off their food
- ♦ Keep losing their balance



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What causes middle ear infection?

Most middle ear infections occur when an infection such as a cold, leads to a build up of mucus in the middle ear. This causes the Eustachian tube (a thin tube that runs from the middle ear to the back of the nose) to become swollen or blocked. The mucus can't drain away properly, making it easier for an infection to spread into the middle ear. An enlarged adenoid (soft tissue at the back of the throat) can also block the Eustachian tube.

The adenoid can be removed if it often causes ear infections. Middle ear infections are more common in younger children because:

- ⇒ The Eustachian tube is smaller in children than in adults.
- ⇒ A child's adenoids are relatively larger than in an adult.

Certain conditions can also increase the risk of middle ear infections including, having a cleft palate or Down's syndrome. It is not possible to prevent ear infections but there are some things you can do that may reduce your child's risk of developing one:

Do:

- * Make sure your child is up to date with their routine vaccinations - particularly pneumococcal vaccine and the DTaP/IPV/Hib/Hep B (6in1) vaccine.
- * If possible, feed your baby breast milk rather than formula milk.

Don't:

- * Expose your child to smoky environments.
- * Give your child a dummy once they are older than 12 months.

- * Feed your child while they are flat on their back.

What is otitis media with effusion?

This is also known as glue ear. It is a build-up of fluid deep inside the ear, which commonly causes temporary hearing loss. The condition tends to be painless but sometimes the pressure of this fluid can cause earache. It will often clear up on its own, although this can take a few months. If the problem is persistent, a minor procedure to place small tubes called



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grommets in the ear may be recommended to help drain the fluid.

For ears to work properly the middle ear needs to be kept full of air. The air travels through the eustachian tube but if this tube is blocked, air cannot enter the middle ear. Then the cell lining in the middle ear begins to produce fluid. This runny liquid may get thicker as it fills the middle ear. With fluid blocking the middle ear, it becomes harder for sound to pass through to the inner ear, making quieter sounds difficult to hear.

To learn more about this or any other health condition that is concerning you, have a chat with one of our trained team.

Answers: Q1, An infection of the middle ear. Q2, Earache, high temperature, being sick, lack of energy, slight hearing loss. Q3, Rubbing or pulling their ear, not reacting to sounds, irritable, off their food, keep losing their balance. Q4, An infection, such as a cold, leads to a build up of mucus in the middle ear. Q5, Because the Eustachian tube is smaller in children and a child's adenoids are relatively larger. Q6, You can call in to see our pharmacist who may be able to help and if not advise you to go to your GP. Q7, Most infections clear up on their own in 2-3 days, but you can use paracetamol or ibuprofen (if suitable) to ease the pain. Q8, It is where the middle part of the ear canal fills up with fluid which can cause temporary hearing loss. Q9, No but you can reduce the risk of your child developing one by keeping their vaccinations up to date and if possible, feed your baby with breast milk rather than formula. Q10, It is a hole or tear in your eardrum which usually gets better on its own within two months.