

Treating your child's ear infection

Your child has been diagnosed with otitis media (an ear infection). The American Academy of Pediatrics has revised its guidelines for the treatment of ear infections in children. Reasons for this include the facts that many bacteria in the community have become resistant to antibiotics (from over use) and because up to 80% of ear infections will resolve without antibiotic treatment. The new guidelines encourage **symptom control along with watchful waiting** for certain patients with an ear infection.

Symptom control consists of adequate pain relief.

You may give Tylenol every 4 hours: dose _____

or Motrin every 6 hours: dose _____

Antipyrine and Benzocaine containing ear drops (a topical anesthetic medication) may be prescribed. These may be used every 4 to six hours. Lay your child with the painful ear facing up and put 2 to three drops in the ear canal. Remaining on her side will help the drops reach the ear drum. **Do not use these drops if there is drainage from the ear.** Call us if there is drainage from the ear.

Warm packs on the ear and elevating the head are both effective for pain relief.

Watchful waiting means calling us after 72 hours to make sure that the symptoms have resolved. If they have not resolved, we may prescribe an antibiotic over the phone. *Of course you may always call us earlier than 72 hours if you are concerned.*

Regardless of the treatment plan chosen, children **may** need to be seen for a follow up visit to confirm the healing of the ear.