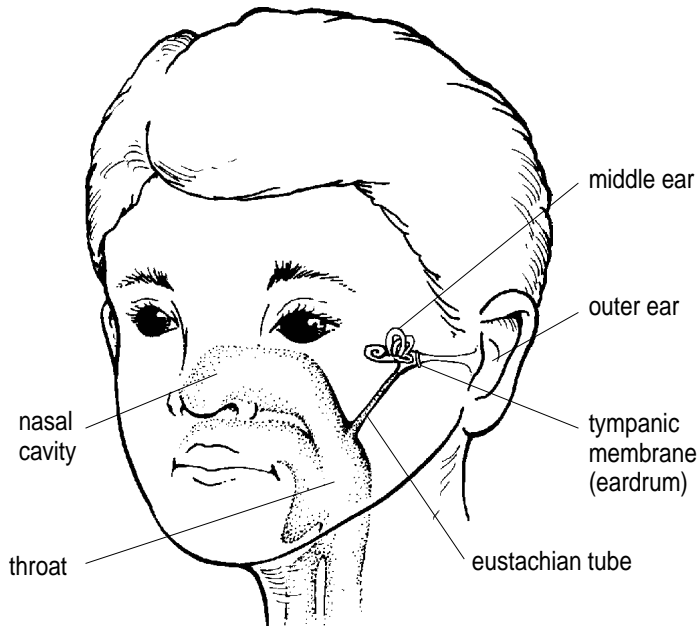


Ear Infections in Children

Middle ear infections are common in children with colds or allergies. They are even more common when the children live with smokers. Unfortunately, some children have many ear infections. The germs that cause these infections get into the middle ear through a small tube (the *eustachian tube*) that connects the nose and the middle ear. Fluid and pus build up in the middle ear, causing pain. Sometimes enough pressure develops to rupture the eardrum, causing a thick bloody drainage.

Treatment can take away your child's pain and prevent further problems (such as hearing loss). Often, follow-up visits are scheduled to check for hearing loss or fluid in the middle ear.



Treatment

- Give your child the prescribed medicine for as long as directed by your health care provider. *Do NOT stop the medicine simply because the child feels better.*
- To ease the child's pain, use Tylenol®, Tempra®, Panadol®, or some other acetaminophen product. Do NOT use aspirin (aspirin may cause other problems).
- It is okay for your child to bathe, shower, or swim (NO diving), unless told not to by your health care provider.
- Do NOT smoke around your child, especially NOT in the home, car, or other confined spaces.
- When bottle-feeding a baby with an ear infection, keep the baby's head higher than the rest of the body, and **hold** the bottle.

Contact the doctor if:

- Pain or fever* lasts for more than 2 or 3 days after you start the medicine.
 - ***Fever** is an oral (by mouth) temperature of over 100°F (37.8°C), or a rectal (by bottom) temperature of over 101°F (38.3°C). For infants under 3 months of age, fever is a rectal temperature of over 100.4°F (38°C).
- Pain or fever comes back 1 to 4 weeks after it first goes away.
- Redness, swelling, or pain develops behind the ears.
- The child develops a rash or stiff neck.

Kaiser Permanente does not endorse any specific brand names; any similar products may be used.

The information presented here is not intended to diagnose health problems or to take the place of professional medical care. If your child has persistent health problems or if you have further questions, please consult your health care provider.

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