



# Ear pain decision aid for children

This decision aid can help you be a part of the shared decision making process with your healthcare clinician for whether to use antibiotics when your child has ear pain.

## What is an ear infection?

Space behind the eardrum is filled with fluid causing pressure.



## What causes ear pain?

Ear pain is not always from an infection. When it is an infection, it may be caused by a virus.

## Treatment options

### 1. Active monitoring with symptom relief treatment

- Use pain and fever reducers as needed
- Use symptom relief treatment options
- Use watchful waiting and/or delayed prescribing
- Let the body fight the infection naturally

### 2. Antibiotics with symptom relief treatment

- Take prescription antibiotics as prescribed if bacterial infection indicated
- Use pain and fever reducers as needed
- Use symptom relief treatment options

## How do children feel after 2-3 days?



**1 OUT OF 20 CHILDREN**  
IS STILL SICK *WITH* ANTIBIOTICS



**2 OUT OF 20 CHILDREN**  
ARE STILL SICK *WITHOUT* ANTIBIOTICS

## Why might antibiotics be used?

- If you have an infection caused by bacteria, your healthcare clinician may prescribe an antibiotic. If so, you should take the antibiotic as directed.

## Why might antibiotics *not* be used?

- If you have an infection caused by a virus, an antibiotic won't help and may make you feel worse.



**Bacteria**

✓ **Yes** antibiotic



**Virus**

✗ **No** antibiotic

- Antibiotics can cause side effects like diarrhea, rash, nausea, dizziness, belly pain, yeast infections or allergic reactions which can sometimes be serious.



Diarrhea



Rash



Nausea



Dizziness

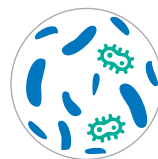


Yeast infection

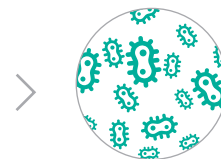


**1 in 4 children have side effects on antibiotics**

## What is antibiotic resistance?



Bacteria, not the body, develop the ability to defeat the antibiotics designed to kill them.



When bacteria become resistant, antibiotics cannot fight them and the bacteria multiply.



Some resistant bacteria can be harder to treat and can spread to other people.



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# Symptom management prescription pad

## Diagnosis

- Cold or cough
- Middle ear fluid
- Flu (influenza)
- Other \_\_\_\_\_
- Viral sore throat
- Bronchitis/bronchiolitis
- Sinusitis

## Over-the-counter medications that may help

- Fever or aches \_\_\_\_\_
- Ear pain \_\_\_\_\_
- Sore throat \_\_\_\_\_
- Nasal congestion \_\_\_\_\_
- Cough/chest congestion \_\_\_\_\_

Always use medicines according to the package instructions or as directed by your clinician.

## Symptom relief treatment options

- Acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil) as directed
- Saline nasal spray
- Humid air (cool mist humidifier or steamy shower)
- Warm compress over sinuses — ear or bridge of the nose
- Raise the head of your child’s bed for children over 2 years of age
- Rubber suction bulb to remove nasal secretions for babies and younger children
- Get plenty of extra fluids. For children over 1 year old, provide water, popsicles, icy treats
- Honey for children over 1 year old
- Throat lozenges or ice for children over 4 years of age
- Gargle with warm salt water (mix ¼ teaspoon salt per 1 cup of warm water)
- Rest
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## Watchful waiting plan

Your healthcare professional believes your child’s illness will likely go away on its own in the next \_\_\_\_\_ days/hours. If your child feels better, no further action is necessary and no antibiotics are needed. In the meantime, follow your healthcare professional’s recommendations below to help your child feel better.

## Follow-up

- If not improved in \_\_\_\_\_ days/hours or if new symptoms occur or if you have other concerns, please call or return to the office for a recheck.
- If not improved in \_\_\_\_\_ days/hours, please fill the prescription provided.
- Other \_\_\_\_\_



### When to call the clinician or seek further care

- If symptoms get worse
- If symptoms do not improve
- If you have further questions

**If a medical emergency arises, call 911, immediately.**