

Ear Infection (Otitis Media)

Information for Parents and Caregivers

What is Otitis Media?

Otitis Media, is more commonly known as a middle ear infection. It is most common in 6-24 month olds with a peak in 6-12 months of age. Having a prior upper respiratory infection (common cold) allows a perfect setup for bacteria to grow in the ear causing a middle ear infection.

Symptoms of a Middle Ear Infection

- Ear pain
- Rubbing of the ear
- Fever
- Often have a runny nose/cold preceding
- Could have draining from ear
- Fussiness

Are Middle Ear Infections Contagious? What is its Duration?

Ear infections are not contagious. The duration of most ear infections is between 3 and 5 days.

Treatment & Symptom Management

If a child is diagnosed with a middle ear infection, antibiotics will be prescribed as treatment.

Prevention

The biggest protective factor for those up to 2 years of age is breastfeeding with exclusive breastfeeding for at least 6 months. Staying up to date on immunizations helps protect against the most common causes of middle ear infections.

When Can a Sick Child Return to Day Care, School, and other Social Settings?

Ear infections are not contagious, however, if a child has a fever or is unable to safely participate they should be excluded from social settings.



ALABAMA REGIONAL CENTER FOR INFECTION PREVENTION
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