

[IMAGE]

Childhood Ear Infections: "Wait-and-See" Approach May Be Best

Otitis media with effusion (OME), more commonly known as fluid in the middle ears, is a common childhood condition. It is estimated that more than 2 million cases of OME are diagnosed in the U.S. each year. OME does not involve any type of infection or inflammation to the ears and usually clears up on its own, without treatment, but that doesn't stop many pediatricians from prescribing antibiotics on a regular basis.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recently issued a new series of guidelines for diagnosis and treatment of OME in children ages 2 months through 12 years. The guidelines recommend that children with OME should be managed with "watchful waiting" for at least three months before recommending other treatment. After three months, children should be re-examined at three- to six-month intervals until: a) the fluid is no longer present, b) significant hearing loss is identified, or c) the practitioner suspects the child has a structural abnormality in the eardrum or middle ear.

The guidelines are not intended to be the "sole source of guidance," but rather a tool to assist health care providers, including doctors of chiropractic. If your child suffers from ear infections, make sure he or she receives a comprehensive evaluation before antibiotics are prescribed.

And for online information on chiropractic care of otitis media, go to <http://www.chiroweb.com/find/tellmeabout/earaches.html>

Reference:

Academy of Pediatrics. Otitis media with effusion. Clinical practice guideline. *Pediatrics* May 2004;113(5):1412-29.

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http://www.toyourhealth.com/mpacms/tyh/article.php?id=431&no_paginate=true&no_b=true