

[IMAGE]

Listen Up: Children Rarely Need Antibiotics for Earaches

By Editorial Staff

Ear infections and related problems are almost a foregone conclusion for most children. According to the Seattle Children's Hospital, ear infections (otitis media) account for at least 25 percent of all pediatric office visits and an astonishing 94 percent of children suffer at least one ear infection in the first three years of life. Typical pediatric treatment involves antibiotics or (in more nonresponsive cases) surgery to place tubes in the ears.

However, antibiotics or surgery may not be the answer. According to an article in the *Journal of Clinical Chiropractic Pediatrics*, nearly 80 percent of children were free of ear infections for the following six months after receiving chiropractic adjustments. The lead researcher explained, "Chiropractic mobilizes drainage of the ear in children, and if they can continue to drain without a buildup of fluid and subsequent infection, they build up their own antibodies and recover more quickly. Once they fight it themselves, kids tend to do very well and stay away from ear infections completely."

Not only that, but other types of conservative treatment - including "watchful waiting" - may be a better option than antibiotics for treating ear problems. Another study, published in the *Archives of Otolaryngology - Head & Neck Surgery*, evaluated the effectiveness of antibiotics in treating middle-ear effusion (MEE) (fluid in the middle ear) as compared to no antibiotic treatment.

A little girl whispering in a little boy's ear. - Copyright â Stock Photo / Register Mark The researchers concluded that for children older than age 2, antibiotics are unnecessary: "Because of a marginal effect of antibiotic therapy on the development of asymptomatic MEE and the known negative effects of prescribing antibiotics, including the development of antibiotic resistance and adverse effects, we do not recommend prescribing antibiotics to prevent MEE."

So, what can you do to help ease your child's pain? The Seattle Children's Hospital recommends using either a warm washcloth against the affected ear or a few drops of warmed sweet oil (such as olive oil), applied directly into the ear, to at least temporarily stop the earache. Talk to your doctor about these options and ask about the benefits of chiropractic adjustments.

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