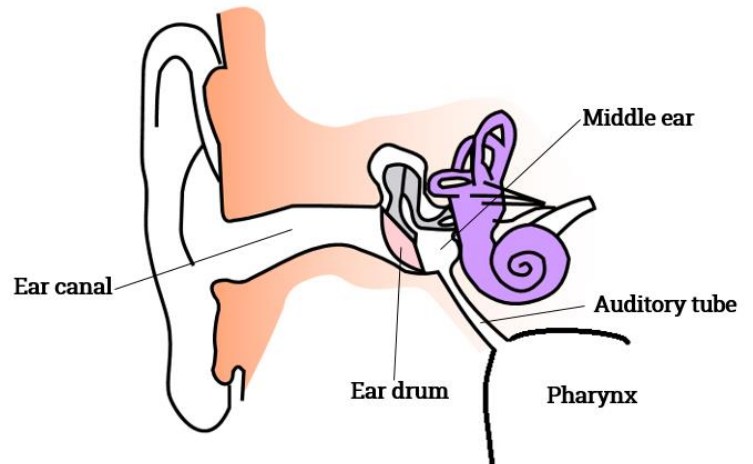


Acute otitis media

What is otitis media?

An infection of the middle ear is a common complication of viral infections of the upper respiratory tract. Accompanying symptoms may include fatigue, cough, sneezing, fever or nonspecific rash. The typical earache is usually caused by fluid behind the eardrum. The middle ear is connected to the pharynx by the auditory tube. When the child has a cold, this tube is often blocked so that secretions from the middle ear cannot drain downwards and instead press against the eardrum from the inside. This leads to earache.



How is otitis media treated?

The body usually fights off infections of the middle ear just as easily as a cold or a sore throat so that antibiotic therapy is rarely necessary. Whether or not your child actually needs antibiotics should always be decided by a physician based on a thorough history and physical inspection. Symptomatic therapy, which you offer your child at home should bring significant symptom relief after one or two days:

- Sufficient rest to promote the body's own healing process
- Enough to drink in order to help dissolve secretions in the upper respiratory tract
- Decongestant nose drops can restore ventilation to the middle ear by freeing the auditory tube. Let the drops run deep into the throat through both nostrils. After a few minutes, the decongestant effect should begin to kick in. Use decongestant nose drops a maximum of 3 times a day for 5 days, otherwise the drops can significantly harm the nasal mucous membranes
- Warm up the ears with an infrared lamp, hot water bottle or a cherry stone pillow. This can further support blood circulation and help dissolve the secretion in the middle ear. Beware of the risk of burns and scalds!
- In case of pain or fever, ibuprofen can also help. Ibuprofen has a decongestant and anti-inflammatory effect and can therefore additionally promote ventilation of the middle ear
- By normalizing the pressure in the middle ear (like during take-off and landing of a plane), the ventilation of the middle ear can be easily checked in older children. Simply tell the child to pinch its nose shut using two fingers and then try to press air out of the nose. If the child hears a sound, then the middle ear's pressure is normalized. This exercise can also help ensure ventilation and can be repeated with children throughout the day.

When do I need to take my child to the doctor again?

If there is no improvement after two days despite the symptomatic therapy described above, you should take your child to the pediatrician's office again. It is possible that a bacterial infection has developed.

Get well soon and good luck with the treatment!