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## Ear Infections

An ear infection is a bacterial infection of the middle ear (the space behind the eardrum). Ear infections are usually a complication of a cold, occurring after the cold blocks off the Eustachian tube that connects the middle ear to the back of the throat.

### Symptoms:

- Ear pain
- Fever
- Muffled hearing
- Fussiness
- Waking at night
- Decreased appetite

### Treatment:

- In children older than 6 months with no fever, we may sometimes hold off on treating with antibiotics, and will treat with ibuprofen/acetaminophen and careful watching instead.
- In children younger than 6 months, those with a fever, or those with more several symptoms, antibiotics will be prescribed. It is important to take the entire course.
- In order to treat the pain, use ibuprofen for children over 6 months, and Tylenol for children young than 6 months.

### Call the Office If:

- Your child does not improve after 2-3 days on antibiotics.
- There is any drainage from the ear.
- Your child develops a fever after starting antibiotics.
- Your child develops a rash.
- Your child's hearing does not improve in the 3-4 weeks after infection.

### Prevention

- Protect your child from secondhand smoke
- Breast feed your baby during the first 6-12 months of life.
- Decrease pacifier use after your child's first birthday.
- Good hand washing to decrease exposure to viral illnesses.

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