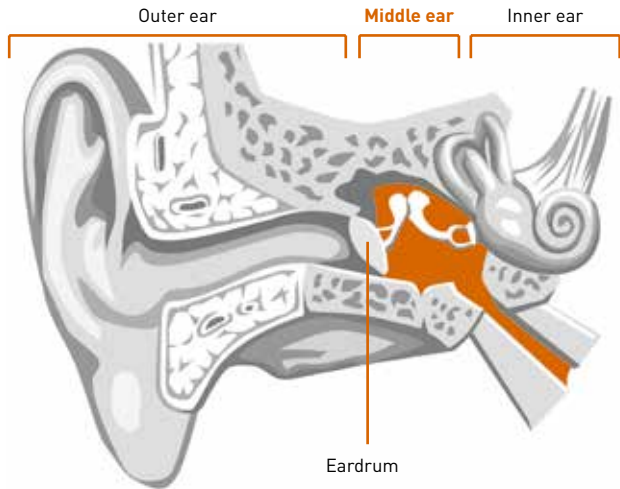


PARENTAL  
INFORMATION

# Middle ear inflammation





## Middle ear inflammation

### **What is a middle ear inflammation?**

The space behind the eardrum is referred to as the middle ear. It has a narrow connection to the pharyngeal space. During an inflammation this space fills with fluid and causes pain through the tension and inflammation of the eardrum. In rare cases the eardrum can rupture due to the great tension and pus can flow out of the ear.

By looking with a special instrument (otoscope) the doctor can see a protrusion of the eardrum from outside and thus diagnose a middle ear inflammation.

### **What are the causes of a middle ear inflammation?**

A middle ear inflammation is caused by viruses or bacteria. The child frequently has a cold with sniffles at the same time.

### **How is a middle ear inflammation shown?**

Older children complain about earaches. Smaller children are whiny and increasingly grab their ear. Fever, diarrhoea or vomiting can occur at the same time. The appearance of pus from the ear is a sign that a hole has been created in the eardrum.

The pain frequently subsides in this case.

### **How is a middle ear inflammation treated?**

Since a middle ear inflammation heals spontaneously in most cases, implementing good pain treatment (with paracetamol (Dafalgan®, Panadol®, ben-u-ron®...) or Voltaren®, Algifor®, Ponstan® etc.) is normally sufficient for the time being. Decongestant nose drops can be additionally administered. Then in a second medical examination it must be decided whether antibiotics are necessary. This examination normally takes place after 1-3 days (the younger the child the earlier). A treatment with antibiotics must be immediately started in the event of a ruptured eardrum with discharge of pus.

### **What are the dangers of a middle ear inflammation?**

A middle ear inflammation normally involves an easily treatable illness. A ruptured eardrum normally heals without any problems.

However, serious complications such as a bone inflammation or meningitis can also occur rarely. That is why it is very important to consistently implement the therapy prescribed by the doctor!

Fluid can remain in the middle ear over a longer period of time after a middle ear inflammation. Children hear worse as a result.

A chronic tubal middle ear inflammation is referred to when this fluid remains in the middle ear. If your child still seems to hear poorly or is irritable after 6-8 weeks, consult your paediatrician.

Note: constantly recurring middle ear inflammations are normally no reason to have a tonsil operation.

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**University Children's Hospital Zurich Accident & Emergency Department**

Consultation telephone (with costs): 0900 266 71 1

### **What to do in the event of earaches?**

If your child complains about earaches, it is advisable to administer a pain reliever (see above). A visit to the doctor is sensible, but not necessary as an emergency, except in the event of:

- Insatiable pain
- The child's poor condition despite pain relievers
- Constant vomiting
- Headaches despite pain relievers
- Swelling in the area of the ear

In the event of uncertainties or questions you can obtain information at any time via the Zurich Children's Hospital consultation telephone: 0900 266 7 11 (Fr. 3.23/min.).



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