

Ear Infections

Ear infections (otitis media) occur when fluid accumulates in the middle ear and cannot drain properly, causing pressure and pain. The conventional treatment often consists of antibiotic therapy, and if it fails repeatedly and/or the infections recur, tympanostomy (tubes installed through the eardrums, under general anaesthesia) is often prescribed. You may be surprised to learn that the benefits of these are highly questionable.

In fact, multiple studies have shown the inefficiency of antibiotics in treating ear infections. A landmark study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* even demonstrated that antibiotic therapy increases infection recurrence two to six times (not a desirable side effect)! Furthermore, excessive antibiotic use has led to the #1 public health problem today: antibiotic-resistant bacteria, according to Dr. Bill Jarvis from the Center for Disease Control.



As for tympanostomy, the picture is not much better. The medical journal *The Lancet* reported no benefit in placing tubes. Other studies showed that permanent damage to the eardrums occurred in over 40% of patients and hearing loss was twice as common in the surgical group compared to the non-surgical group. Furthermore, the recurrence of middle ear effusion seems to occur in as high as 40% of children who get tubes.

But the news is not all bad. A study published in *the Journal of Manipulative and Physiological Therapeutics* showed improvement in 93% of cases, with chiropractic adjustments. Another study with 332 children showed an 85% success rate in the chiropractic treatment of ear infection verified by tympanography, with no recurrence within 6 months. Interestingly, 95 of the children were referred by medical doctors, giving indications of the openness shown towards chiropractic by a part of the medical community.

Why is chiropractic so successful? Remember that every function of the body is controlled by the nervous system. An adjustment restores normal nerve function to:

- 1- the Eustachian tube, allowing for proper drainage the middle ear
- 2- the immune system, increasing the body's natural resistance to infection.

It's that simple!

As well as chiropractic, which we feel is essential, the following recommendations may also help:

- No dairy products, bananas or nuts; they favour thick mucous production
- Lots of water; it thins out mucous secretions, helping drainage
- Vitamin C, 250mg x age in years, per day, in several doses
- Acidophilus, 1 capsule per day, which will restore normal, healthy bacteria in body cavities, including ears and sinuses.

If you know someone with ear infections, give us a call. We can help!

Please call our office to register for our lecture on childhood conditions: colic, ear infections, and asthma. The lecture will be held at the Lethbridge Public Library, on Tuesday, January 16, at 7 p.m. Please call early as space is limited.

Dr. Liana Harper and Dr. Pierre Gaulin are in private practice in Coaldale, and are the proud parents of two healthy children. They can be reached at

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Disclaimer: The above represents the opinion of the authors, based on extensive research and years of clinical practice. It is not intended for self-diagnosis and treatment. Please consult a health care professional as your specific condition might require different recommendations.