

Self Care - Earache in Children

Earache is very common in children.

What causes earache in children?

Earache is most commonly caused by a build up of mucus behind the eardrum (in the middle part of the ear). This is very common when your child has a cold. As well as causing some pain, it can also cause your child's hearing to be reduced for a few days.

Sometimes this mucus can become infected with a virus or bacteria. When this happens your child may seem unwell, with a high temperature and some children may vomit. Sometimes the eardrum can burst and fluid will leak from the ear for a few days. This is nothing to worry about. The burst ear drum will heal a few weeks after the infection has gone.

Does it require treatment?

No, not usually. The mucus often goes away on its own. Any infection is usually mild, and usually requires no treatment. The pain can usually be well controlled with painkillers, such as paracetamol, which also help to control your child's fever. Antibiotics are only prescribed in rare cases, because any infection usually gets better on its own in a few days.

How long does it last?

The pain usually only lasts for 2-3 days. Sometimes the mucus can remain in the middle ear for a few months after the pain has settled. This is quite normal.

When should I take my child to see the doctor?

- If your child is getting no better after 2-3 days
- If your child develops a swelling behind the ear
- If your child's hearing remains reduced after 2-3 months.

If you would like further advice contact NHS Direct on 08454647 or see www.nhs.uk
Adapted from www.patient.co.uk www.webmentorlibrary.com



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