



What can I do to help my child?

Make sure to keep your next appointment with your doctor to see if the fluid has resolved.

If your school-age child is having some temporary hearing problems, inform his teacher so that he or she can be moved closer to the front of the classroom.

Call your doctor if your child develops a fever or any other worrisome symptoms.

South Carolina Careful Antibiotic Use (C.A.Use) Taskforce Members

- Association of Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology (APIC)
- Blue Cross/Blue Shield of SC
- Children's Hospital of the Greenville Hospital System
- Companion Healthcare
- National Association of Pediatric Nurse Associates and Practitioners—S.C. Chapter
- Parish Nurses
- SC Department of Health and Environmental Control
- SC Nurses Association
- SC Parent Teacher Association
- SC Pharmacy Association
- SC Primary Care Association
- SC Public Health Association
- USC College of Pharmacy

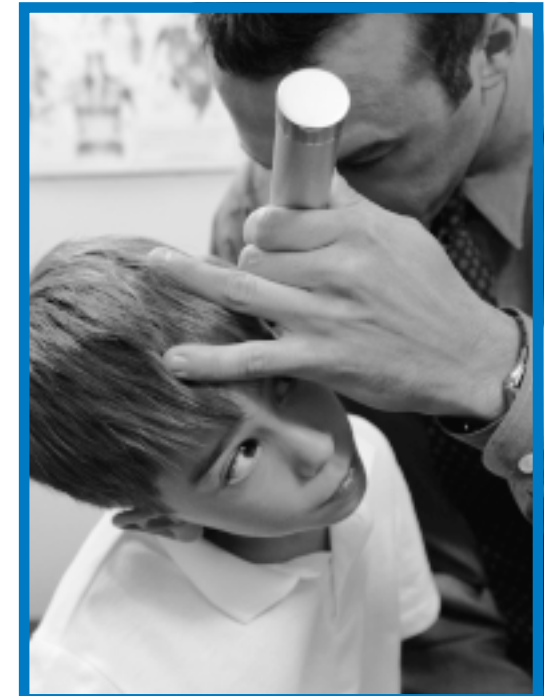
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Because *sometimes*
the **best** medicine
is **NO** medicine.

Fluid in the Middle Ear



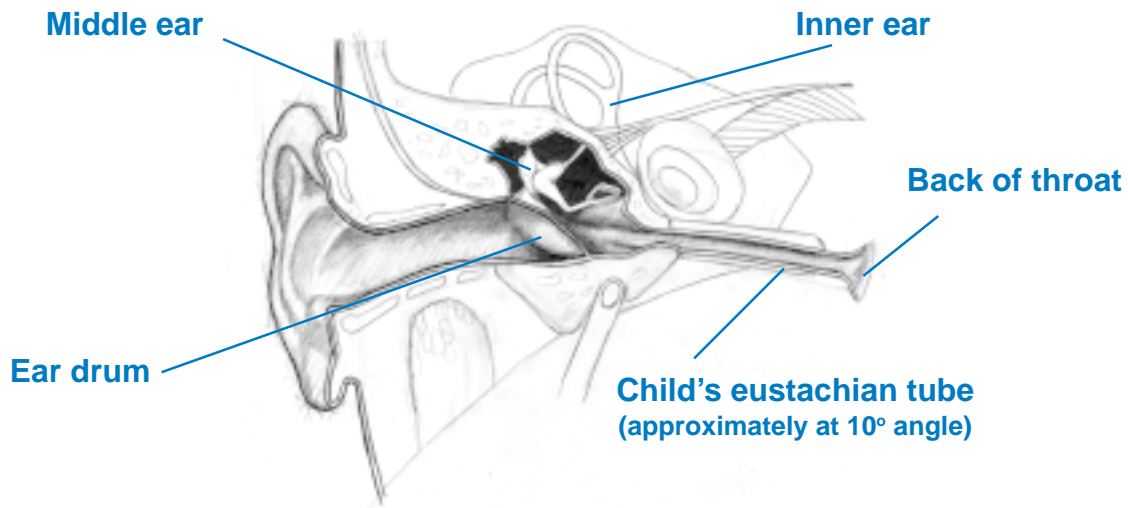
Your child has been diagnosed with Otitis Media with Effusion (OME) which means **fluid in the middle ear**. This condition almost always goes away on its own and does not have to be treated with antibiotics unless it persists.

What causes fluid in the middle ear?

Fluid may build up in the middle ear for two reasons. When a child has a cold, the middle ear makes fluid—just like the nose does. Some of this fluid gets trapped behind the eardrum. Second, many children who have recently had a middle ear infection (acute otitis media) will continue to have some fluid left behind their eardrum even after the infection is cured.

What are the symptoms of fluid in the middle ear?

OME usually does not bother children. A few children with middle ear fluid will complain of a funny feeling in their ear, slight difficulty hearing, dizziness or vertigo. These symptoms are temporary and go away as the fluid disappears.



How is fluid in the middle ear treated?

The best treatment is watchful waiting. Studies show that antibiotics are **not** very helpful with this condition. Middle ear fluid usually goes away on its own, though it takes a few weeks. Your doctor want wish to re-check the ears in a couple months to make sure the fluid has resolved.

Are antibiotics ever needed for fluid in the middle ear?

Antibiotics are sometimes tried if middle ear fluid is still present after a few months. Antibiotics seem to help some, but not all children. If the fluid does not go away, your child may be referred for a hearing test or to see an ear, nose and throat specialist.

Why not just try antibiotics now?

Antibiotics are **not** helpful for most children with fluid in the middle ear. In fact,

unnecessary antibiotics can be harmful. After each course of antibiotics, children are more likely to develop resistant bacteria (germs) in their noses and throats. These resistant bacteria are not killed by the usual antibiotics.

When children get infections with resistant germs, it is more difficult to cure the infection. Children may need more expensive antibiotics, antibiotics by needle or even antibiotics in the hospital.

Since fluid in the middle ear is not very bothersome to most children, it is better to wait and give antibiotics only when they are needed.

