

## **Adventist Healthcare: Health Tip of the Week**

### **Ear Infection**

Ear infection (otitis media) is the most common cause of pediatrician office visits among young children. Three out of four children experience otitis media by the time they are three years old. By age seven, up to 95 percent of all U.S. children will have experienced at least one bout of acute otitis media (AOM).

Otitis media usually happens when viruses and/or bacteria get inside the ear and cause infection, often as the result of another illness such as a cold. When the ears are infected, the Eustachian tubes become inflamed and swollen. The adenoids, located in the throat, can also become infected.

### Two Main Types of Ear Infections

Acute otitis media (AOM): Parts of the ear are infected and swollen. It also means that fluid and mucus are trapped inside the ear. AOM can be very painful.

Otitis media with effusion (OME): Fluid and mucus stay trapped in the ear after the infection is over. OME makes it harder for the ear to fight new infections. This fluid can also affect hearing.

### Symptoms

- Pull or tug at ears
- Cry more than usual
- Fluid draining out of ears
- Trouble sleeping
- Problem keeping balance
- Trouble hearing

Allergies: A new study shows that children with food allergies may be more likely to develop ear infections with fluid buildup.

Asthma: A new report shows that frequent ear infections may mean an increased risk of developing asthma.

Smoking: A study showed that children exposed to cigarette smoke had a 38 percent higher risk of middle ear infections.

An ear infection can cause temporary hearing, speech and language problems. If left untreated, these problems can become more serious.

Sources: National Institute on Deafness & other Communication Disorders, healthinfo, WebMD with AOL Health and Washington and Shady Grove Adventist Hospitals. The Health Tip of the Week is for educational purposes only. For additional information, consult your physician. Please feel free to copy and distribute this health resource.