How can I treat my child’s ear infection?

Five out of six children experience ear infection before the age of 3.

Two common types of ear infections:

**Otitis externa** (“swimmer’s ear”)
Usually occurs after swimming in fresh water lakes or chlorinated swimming pools. It affects the outer-ear canal and is caused by a bacterial infection.

**Otitis media**
This middle-ear infection occurs behind the eardrum and is caused by viruses or bacteria. Your child might experience a fever.

Signs and symptoms:
- Moderate to severe ear pain
- Fever
- Irritability
- Dizziness
- Nausea and vomiting
- Fluid leaking from the ear
- Hearing difficulties in affected ear

Diagnosis and treatment
Your physician will examine the ear for evidence of fluid or inflammation. Many middle-ear infections are viral and resolve without treatment. Acetaminophen or ibuprofen can be used for pain and fever control. For infections that turn into bacterial infections, antibiotics may be prescribed.

Preventive care
Children should wash their hands and faces frequently and avoid contact with people exhibiting viral symptoms.

Exercise and a balanced diet will also provide nutrients the body needs to protect itself.

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