



Middle Ear Infections

General Information

- Much more common in children, usually less than age 4
- More common in children exposed to cigarette smoke
- Most children grow out of their ear infections, but it can occur at different ages
- Recurring ear pain occurring in an adult – should be investigated by an ENT to rule out problems outside the ear.

What symptoms can you have?

- Pain in the ear, fever and misery and sometimes vomiting
- Crying, pulling at the ear in small children
- Hearing loss in affected ear
- Discharge if the ear drum bursts

What your ENT Doctor wants to know?

- Does your child have recurrent ear infections, and how often
- Are you worried about hearing loss
- Has your child had a burst ear drum
- Is it just one ear playing up or both

How are Outer Ear Infections treated?

- Some ear infections are associated with generalised viral infections and do not require any treatment apart from supportive therapy (medication to reduce pain and fever, oral fluids)
- Some severe bacterial ear infections require antibiotics
- A ruptured ear drum may require cleaning of the ear canal and the application of antibiotic drops.
- Recurrent middle ear infections, particularly if associated with hearing loss or recurrent perforations, may require the insertion of grommets (middle ear ventilation tubes)

Worrying Symptoms:

- Swelling above and behind the ear (sits sticks out from the side of the head)
- Weakness of the facial muscles on the side of the infection
- Change in the level of consciousness (rare)