

NATURAL APPROACH TO EAR INFECTIONS

Question: My two year old has repeated ear infections and now the doctor wants her to have ear tubes. I have heard a chiropractor can treat this. Is that true?

Yes, chiropractors are able to treat ear infections. As you know, these can be extremely painful for your child and it is the most common illness affecting babies and young children.

The infection strikes the middle ear, which is known as otitis media. Symptoms include ear pain, fever and irritability. It can be either bacterial or viral in origin and often occurs with colds.

If it becomes a recurring problem, your child can risk permanent hearing damage and associated speech problems.

Standard treatment is antibiotics, which work only if it is bacterial in nature. These will not help a viral ear infection.

If this doesn't work, then ear tubes are surgically inserted into the eardrum. The tube relieves pressure in the ear and prevents repeated fluid build up. When the ear drains, the infection does not take place.

Although the treatment is effective, it has to be repeated in 20-30% of cases. Unfortunately, this surgery requires general anesthesia, which also has risks.

If the ear tubes don't work, children sometimes under go adenoidectomy (surgical removal of the adenoids)-- an option that is effective mostly through the first year after surgery.

Chiropractic care can stop this cycle of antibiotics and avoid surgery. We have helped numerous children over the years, having about an 80% success rate.

Treatment involves gentle, specific pressure applied to the neck muscles and bones (vertebrae). Since these are young babies and children, our treatment is always applied gently.

Additionally, we do gentle massage to help drain the lymph glands around the ear. Again, this is easily tolerated by the child. Parents are always present during treatment, knowing treatment is safe and easily tolerated.

Most children respond in 6-8 treatments over 3-4 weeks. If a baby has an abnormally shaped Eustachian tube (which drains the ear), they may not respond. Also, smoking in the home will cause recurring ear infections in the baby. Talk to your doctor of chiropractic if your child has ear infections.

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