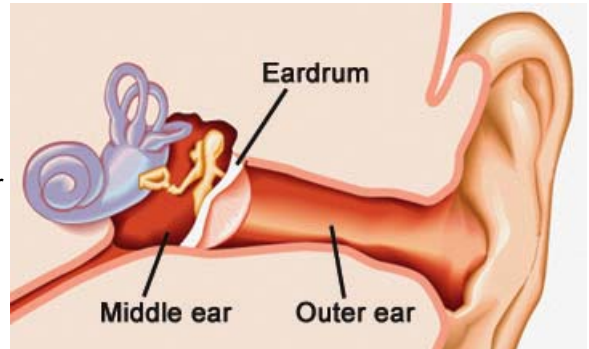


Discharge Instructions

FLUID IN THE MIDDLE EAR

[Adult, Serous Otitis]

Earaches can happen without an infection. This can occur when air and fluid builds up behind the ear drum causing pain and reduced hearing. This is called "Serous Otitis Media". It means "fluid in the middle ear". It can happen when you have a cold if congestion blocks the passage that drains the middle ear ("Eustachian Tube"). It may also occur with nasal allergies, gastric acid reflux (GERD) or after a bacterial middle ear infection.



The pain may come and go. You may hear clicking or popping sounds when chewing or swallowing.

It often takes from several weeks up to three months for the fluid to clear on its own. Oral pain relievers and ear drops help with pain. Decongestants and antihistamines can be tried but their effect is not always helpful. This condition does not respond to antibiotics since there is no infection.

If there has been no improvement after three months, surgery may be used to drain the fluid and insert a small tube in the eardrum to permit continued drainage.

Because the middle ear fluid can become infected, it is important to watch for signs of an ear infection (see warning signs below), which may develop later.

HOME CARE:

- 1) You may use acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil) to control pain, unless another medicine was prescribed. **[NOTE:** If you have chronic liver or kidney disease or ever had a stomach ulcer or GI bleeding, talk with your doctor before using these medicines.] (Aspirin should never be used in anyone under 18 years of age who is ill with a fever. It may cause severe liver damage.)
- 2) You may use over-the-counter decongestants such as pseudoephedrine (Sudafed).

FOLLOW UP with your doctor or as advised if you are not feeling better after three days.

RETURN PROMPTLY or contact your doctor if any of the following occur:

- Ear pain gets worse or does not start to improve after three days of treatment
- Fever over 100.0° F (37.8° C) oral for more than three days
- Fluid or blood draining from the ear
- Headache or sinus pain
- Stiff neck
- Unusual drowsiness or confusion