An ear infection is a collection of fluid with swelling and pain in the ear. The infection can be in the middle or outer ear canal. A child with this type of infection must be seen by a doctor. The infection may be treated with an antibiotic. Chronic middle ear fluid, if not treated, may lead to hearing loss.

**Things that may put your child at risk for an ear infection:**

- Colds and allergies
- Drinking from a bottle while lying down or drinking from a propped bottle
- Being near anyone smoking (anywhere in the house or car)
- Day Care
- Swimming

**Signs of ear infection:**

- Ear pain
- Ear drainage
- Fever
- Changes in hearing
- Dizziness (older children), poor balance (younger children)

Other children may be fussy, especially when lying down. They may not want to suck on a bottle or pacifier. They may also pull or poke at their ear and have swelling behind or below the ear.

**Things to do at home to prevent ear infections:**

- Do not let anyone smoke around your child.
- Hold your baby while feeding.
- Never let your baby lay flat while drinking a bottle.
- Never prop your baby’s bottle.
- Do not clean the inside of your child’s ear with a Q-tip® or any other object.
- Use good hand washing to help prevent the spread of germs.
- Limit or consider changing your child care options if your child has recurring ear infections.
Medications:

- If your child’s doctor prescribes any medicine, give the medicine exactly as ordered.

- You may give acetaminophen (Tylenol®) for pain or fever higher than 101° F (38.3° C). Be sure to follow the package instructions for the amount to give your child based on his weight and age. Do not give more than 5 doses in 24 hours.

Keep your child’s follow-up doctor appointment to be sure the infection is gone.

His appointment is on _____/_____/_____ at __________ in the _____________________________.

Call your child’s doctor or the Children’s Mercy Hospital Information Line at (816) 234-3188 if:

- Your child still has a fever or pain after taking the prescribed medication for more than two days.
- Your child won’t drink.
- Your child is not getting better.
- You see drainage coming from your child’s ear.
- You are concerned about your child’s hearing and speech.
- You have questions or concerns.