

Safety Net Antibiotic Prescriptions (SNAP) for Middle Ear Infections

Many ear infections get better in 2-3 days without antibiotics. Children who meet criteria can be safely monitored for 2-3 days to see if symptoms improve without antibiotics. If symptoms are not better in 2-3 days, or if symptoms worsen, (temperature > 102.2, ear pain is not controlled with pain medications, or new drainage is seen from ear,) the antibiotic should be started.

Patients Who Qualify for a SNAP:

- 6-24 months old: mild symptoms and infection in 1 ear
- Over 24 months old: mild symptoms and infection in 1 or 2 ears
- Mild Symptoms: no more than mild ear pain for less than 48 hours, fever lower than 102.2 F

Patients Who Do NOT Qualify for a SNAP:

- Severe signs and symptoms at any age. (Severe ear pain, fever higher than 102.2)
- Infants < 6 months
- Children 6-24 months with ear infection in both ears
- Immune deficiencies
- Medical conditions involving the ear
- Ear tubes in place
- Ruptured ear drum (ear drainage present)
- History of recent or hard-to-treat ear infections

Recommended Duration of Antibiotic Therapy by Age/Severity

10 days

- Children with severe middle ear infection
- Children < 24 months of age

7 days

- Children 2-5 years of age with non-severe middle ear infection

5-7 days

- Children ≥ 6 years of age with non-severe middle ear infection

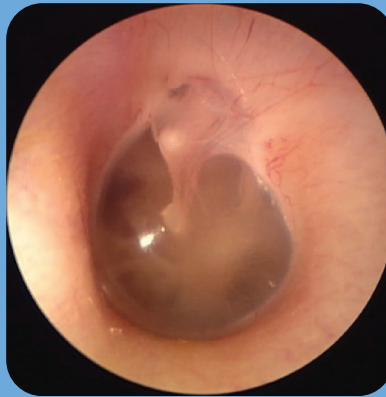


Examples of Tympanic Membrane Exams

Sundgaard, JV, Harte, J, Bray, P, et al. Deep metric learning for otitis media classification. Medical Image Analysis. 2021;71:102034. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.media.2021.102034>. Images by CC 4.0.

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Normal Ear Drums



Otitis Media with Effusion (OME)

(Ear drums with clear fluid trapped behind them)



Acute Otitis Media (AOM)

(Middle ear infection)



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