

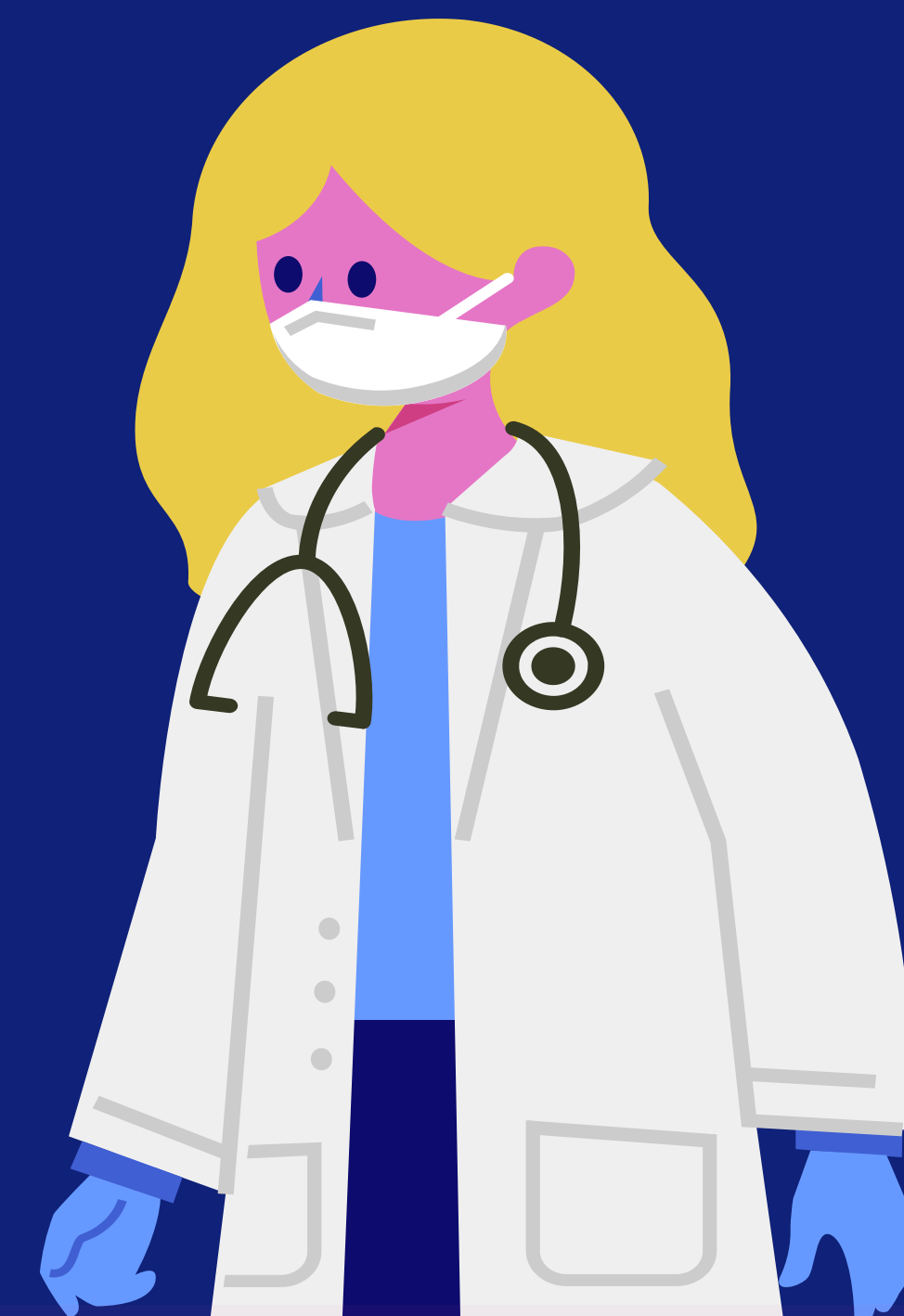
What should you know about ear infections?

As a Parent

&

As a Prescriber

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Acute Otitis Media is a medical term for an ear infection. It is an infection in the middle ear caused by **bacteria or viruses**. It can cause fever, ear pain or drainage, or irritability.

What is Acute Otitis Media (AOM)?

Diagnosis requires a **middle ear effusion** with one of the following: moderate/ severe bulging of tympanic membrane (TM), new onset otorrhea, or mild bulging & 48 hours of otalgia or intense erythema of TM. Click [here](#) for images.

No! If your child meets criteria, antibiotics may not be needed to get better. This is called "**Watchful Waiting**." You may get a prescription to fill only if there is no improvement in 2-3 days.

Are antibiotics always necessary?

For certain patients, **wait to prescribe antibiotics** as they may improve without them ("**Watchful Waiting**"). You can provide a prescription with instructions to fill if not better in 2-3 days. Click [here](#) for more information on who qualifies.

Amoxicillin or **Augmentin** are effective in treating bacteria causing ear infections. Other antibiotics, like **cefdinir**, are used if patients have an allergy to amoxicillin. **Acetaminophen** or **ibuprofen** can help with symptoms.

If prescribed, what antibiotics should be used?

High dose amoxicillin has excellent coverage of *S. pneumoniae* & is first-line. **Augmentin** is initially used if **amoxicillin** was used in the **past 30 days** or if **concomitant conjunctivitis**. It adds *H. influenzae* & *M. catarrhalis* coverage. Duration varies by age (5-10 days).

If your child **isn't improving** and is **NOT on an antibiotic**, call the provider or fill the prescription as instructed. If your child is **taking an antibiotic**, call the provider as another antibiotic may be needed.

What to do if the child isn't improving in 2-3 days?

Use **Augmentin** if patient failed amoxicillin treatment. **IM ceftriaxone** can be used if patient failed Augmentin. **Cefdinir** is **not recommended** after **treatment failure** as it does not provide additional *S. pneumoniae* coverage.

Want to learn more about ear infections? Click [here](#) to find more information.

Where can I find helpful resources?

For more information on diagnosis and treatment of AOM, check out the **Outpatient Antibiotic Handbook** located [here](#). Click [here](#) for resources for talking to families.



Want to win a prize? Click [here](#) to take a short quiz



Guest author, Dr. Eddie Lyon is a fellow in the division of Infectious Diseases. He works at the Adele Hall campus in both the inpatient and outpatient settings. He is passionate about patient education. He loves being outside with his wife, son, and daughter!