

Children's Health

Tips On Preventing And Detecting Ear Infections

(NAPSA)—Heeding some simple advice could help your child avoid an ear infection, or help identify an infection early, so you can take action quickly.

Middle-ear infections (acute otitis media) are so prevalent that 83 percent of children under the age of 3 have had one or more and nearly 50 percent have had three or more. According to a recent study in *Pediatrics* magazine, ear infections are the No. 1 reason for:

- Children's visits to the emergency room;
- Illness visits to the doctor's office; and
- Antibiotic prescriptions.

While an infection can develop anytime, the majority occur during the cough/cold season when fluid lingering in the ear, after a cold or flu, becomes infected with either bacteria or a virus.

Dr. Jerome Klein, an expert on middle-ear infections in the U.S. and co-author of "Otitis Media in Infants and Children," offers tips to help prevent, detect and treat ear infections:

- Keep child's immunizations up to date.
- If possible, breast-feed rather than bottle-feed.
- Try to avoid exposure to large groups of children (e.g., large-group daycare), as multiple colds may lead to frequent ear infections.
- Avoid child's exposure to tobacco smoke.
- Practice frequent hand washing to decrease germ transmission.

If you suspect your child has an ear infection, some common signs include:

- Fluid in the middle ear



Middle-ear fluid is a key sign of an ear infection. Parents can detect it at home using a new medical device.

- Pulling or rubbing the ear (indicating ear pain)
- Irritability
- Decrease in appetite
- Fever
- Runny or stuffy nose and/or cough.

Parents can detect the presence of middle-ear fluid, a key sign of an ear infection, at home by using EarCheck® Middle Ear Monitor. This first-of-its-kind medical device uses acoustic reflectometry (sound waves) to detect fluid and is based on the same technology used by doctors since the mid '90s.

Parents of infants and children with middle-ear fluid and/or other signs of an ear infection may want to consult their physician. A child diagnosed with acute otitis media may be prescribed antibiotics.

The doctor may consider observing (for 48-72 hours) a child who has mild-to-moderate symptoms and/or an uncertain diagnosis and is older than 2 years.

For more information, visit www.earcheck.com or call (888) EAR-CHEK (327-2435).