

# 7 STEPS TO PREVENT EAR INFECTIONS

## Seven Steps to Preventing Childhood Ear Infection

Do you know a child who suffers from recurring ear infections? By age two, 66% of children withstand at least one episode of middle ear infection, or acute otitis media (AOM).

ADM is usually a complication of an upper respiratory infection. During a cold or flu, bacteria may infiltrate the ear and cause swelling, in turn blocking openings within the ear and inhibiting drainage. As a result, painful inflammation sets in. The lack of drainage is exacerbated by the horizontal orientation of infants' ear canals, which gradually assume a 45-degree angle as children mature.

As a prevention specialist, Dr. Borio is concerned about the alarmingly high incidence of ADM among the community's youngsters. The good news is that parents may spare their children the agony of ear infections by following the seven simple steps outlined below.

### 1. Consider Chiropractic Care

Cutting-edge research reveals that chiropractic care may promote ear health.

One study enrolled 46 children under the age of five with ear infections. A whopping 93% of patients recovered within ten days of receiving chiropractic care. And, 43% improved with only one or two visits (Journal of Manipulative and Physiological Therapeutics 199,6;19:169-77).

Another study looked at five youngsters with chronic recurrent middle ear infections. The children had been under medical care for at least six months, but had failed to recover. All the children improved with no more than five chiropractic visits (Journal of Clinical Chiropractic Pediatrics 1996;1 :66).

How does chiropractic care quell the risk of AOM? Doctors of chiropractic, like Dr. Borio, provide exemplary advice on all-natural, holistic prevention strategies. In addition, chiropractors are experts at detecting and correcting dysfunctional areas in the spine where movement is restricted or bones (vertebrae) are out of alignment - a condition termed vertebral subluxation. Dr. Borio uses specialized techniques called pediatric chiropractic adjustments to correct vertebral subluxations in young patients. These maneuvers are modified for growing spines, and are extremely gentle and safe.

Studies show that chiropractic adjustments may boost the immune system, in turn warding off ailments such as AOM (Journal of Manipulative and Physiological Therapeutics 1992;15:83-9). Doctors of chiropractic also speculate that ear canal blockage occurs when a tiny muscle in the ear (the tensor velopalatini) becomes dysfunctional. This muscle is innervated by nerves that can be traced back to the spinal cord in the upper neck. Chiropractors theorize that vertebral subluxations interfere with nerve flow to this muscle, and that this interference is removed by chiropractic adjustments.

### 2. Avoid Unnecessary Antibiotics

What's wrong with antibiotics for ear infection? Although serious cases of AOM may require antibiotics, the indiscriminate use of these drugs is generating serious health problems in children worldwide. Most childhood ear infections are caused by pneumococcus or haemophilus bacteria. Scientific studies reveal that an excessive use of antibiotics has led to "super" strains of these bacteria, which are resistant to even the most aggressive drugs.



Research indicates that antibiotics are usually not necessary in cases of ear infection. Scientists in the Netherlands looked at 240 children with AOM. The children were prescribed either placebo or the antibiotic amoxicillin. There was no significant difference between the two groups in ear exam findings, pain duration, or crying.

The study's authors conclude that the "modest effect [of antibiotic drugs] does not justify prescription of antibiotics at the first visit, provided close surveillance can be guaranteed." (British Medical Journal 2000;320:350-4. )

### **3. Breast Feed Your Youngster**

Studies show that breastfeeding bolsters an infant's immune system, in turn preventing ear infection. One analysis followed 306 babies. Six month old infants who were fed exclusively by breastfeeding were half as likely to experience a first episode of ear infection, compared with formula-fed babies (Pediatrics 1997;100:E7).

### **4. Limit Dairy Intake**

Studies suggest that a diet rich in dairy products - such as cow's milk, cheese and ice cream - boosts a child's odds of ear infection (Otolaryngology Clinics of North America 1992;25:197-211). That's why many doctors of chiropractic advise parents of ear infection-prone youngsters to substitute dairy items with calcium-fortified soy products such as soy milk and tofu.

### **5. Stay Smoke-Free**

Children who are exposed to cigarette smoke develop more ear infections than children who grow up in smoke-free environments (Pediatric Dentistry 1998;20:327-30). So, if you smoke, quit - or, at the very least, make sure to smoke outside and far away from your child. In addition, avoid bringing your little one into smoke-filled homes or restaurants.

### **6. Stock Up On Antioxidants**

Fruits and vegetables are chock-full of disease-fighting antioxidant chemicals. These chemicals have been proven to boost the immune system by destroying molecules called free radicals, which incite disease. On the other hand, junk foods, including fried foods, sugar laden snacks and high-fat items, promote free radical production.

### **7. Restrict Pacifier Use**

Popping a pacifier into an infant's mouth may quell cries, but it may also up the child's likelihood of developing AOM, according to a paper in a recent issue of the journal Pediatrics.

The study enrolled 490 children under 18 months of age who were cared for at 14 well-baby clinics. Half of the clinics distributed pamphlets on the hazards of pacifiers and instructed parents to limit their use. The remaining "control" clinics did not provide instruction on pacifier use.

Children cared for by clinics who taught parents about the hazards of pacifiers showed a 21 % drop in continuous pacifier use. What's more, infants treated at these clinics exhibited a 29% reduced risk of ear infection, compared with children cared for at control clinics. Youngsters treated at both types of clinics who did not use pacifiers on a continuous basis enjoyed 33% fewer AOM episodes than did children who used pacifiers continuously",

"Our results strongly suggest that even the restriction of pacifier use to the moments when the infant is falling asleep will reduce the occurrence of AOM," explain the study's authors, who also stress that ear infection "is such a common disease during childhood, even small changes in children's everyday habits may have major effects on its occurrence." (Pediatrics 2000;106:483-8.)

### ***Make Your Child's Health A Priority Today***

*Your doctor of chiropractic can help your entire family learn to focus on prevention by embracing nutritional and lifestyle modifications and emphasizing spinal health. This revolutionary approach can effectively ward off AOM and other common childhood disorders.*

*Make your child's health a priority today - schedule your little one for a pediatric chiropractic checkup.*



***[www.AlleghenyHealth.com](http://www.AlleghenyHealth.com)***

**Gibsonia**  
5499 William Flynn Hwy  
Gibsonia, PA 15044  
724-443-8444

**Brackenridge**  
825 Freeport Road  
Brackenridge, PA 15014  
724-224-2224

**Monroeville**  
One Racquet Lane  
Monroeville, PA 15146  
412-372-3772