

Memo:

Pediatric Emergency Department (Pronto Soccorso) tel. 0498213515



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SALUS PUERI



1992 - 2017

Salus Pueri Foundation has been active since 1992 and its main goal is to raise funds to support the activities of the Pediatric Hospital of Padua. Every day we work to make our hospital a welcoming and child and family friendly place, and to promote a culture where humanization is at the heart of care.

These parents information guides of the Pediatric Emergency Department of Padua have been created to facilitate the provision of clear and complete information to parents whose kids are experiencing acute health issues.

The parents information guides are not intended to replace the recommendations and tailored advice provided by your pediatrician.

Support the Pediatric Hospital of Padua!

Fondazione Salus Pueri

Via Giustiniani 3
35128 Padova
tel. 0498762390

fondazionesaluspueri@gmail.com
www.fondazionesaluspueri.it
 seguici

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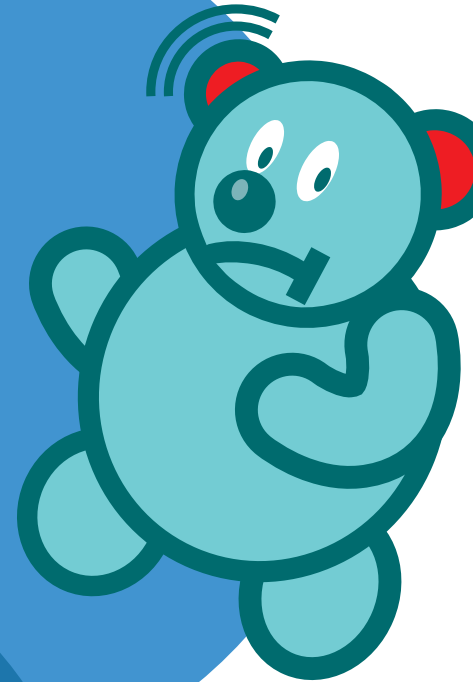


Dipartimento per la Salute
della Donna e del Bambino
- Pronto Soccorso Pediatrico -



FONDAZIONE
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Otitis



in collaboration with **fimp**,
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Parents
information
guides



What is otitis?

Otitis is a very common ear infection in children. Depending on which part of the ear is affected, it can be distinguished between **middle ear infections (otitis media)**, which affects the so-called **tympanic cavity**, protected from the outside by a thin membrane named eardrum, and **outer ear infection (otitis externa)**, which instead affects the **external auditory canal**.

Signs and symptoms of ear infections

Pain is the symptom that both types of otitis have in common, and may be often severe.

Due to pain, younger children may become irritable and/or touch their ears and/or refuse to eat.

Acute otitis media can also manifest itself with fever, which is often high and may sometimes be the only symptom.

Otitis media can lead to the perforation of the eardrum, which leads to discharge of thick secretions from the ear canal; in this case pain lessens. The perforated membrane most often heals by itself.

Otitis media can at times be complicated by **otomastoiditis**, in which the infection spreads to the surrounding bone tissue: in this case, your child will have redness, pain and swelling of the area behind the ear, swelling and bulging of the ear.

Outer ear infections presents with leaking discharge from the ear canal since the start of the infection; outer ear redness and pain induced by ear pressure and movements can also be present.

Background information

- Over 80% of children under three years of age have at least one episode of otitis media
- Unvaccinated children are more likely to be affected by acute otitis media and serious infections
- Smoke exposure is a favoring factor for the development of otitis media
- Swimming in pools and local traumas are favoring factors to the development of otitis externa
- Otitis is not a contagious disease and children can go back to school when there is no fever
- A transient reduction in hearing may persist after otitis.

When to urgently seek medical care:

- if your baby is less than 6 months of age
- if your child looks miserable and very unwell
- if the pain persists despite the use of pain medications
- if there are very profuse discharge from the ear canal
- if there is redness and/or bulging of the ear
- if the symptoms worsen over time

Care at home

In both types of ear infection, it is important to:

- always treat pain with the right pain medications (oral/rectal paracetamol or ibuprofen)
- do not administer pain medications through the ear canal without consulting a doctor first
- give the therapy advised by your doctor.

Treatment

Otitis media: in most cases, otitis media resolves spontaneously in a few days and does not require antibiotic therapy, especially in children older than two years of age.

Antibiotics can be prescribed by your pediatrician if high fever is present, if the symptoms persist and/or if the child is less than two years.

Otitis externa: local antibiotics administered as ear drops in the ear canal are the treatment of choice.

To apply the drops, lay your child on her/his side and put them in the ear canal, wait a few minutes in this position. Avoid getting water into the ear during the bath or shower.

Only when otitis externa is associated with high fever and significant swelling and tenderness of the ear, antibiotics by mouth or through a vein can be prescribed by a doctor.