

EAR PAIN and INFECTIONS **(Otitis Media)**

Acute Otitis Media

With a painful ear infection, antibiotic treatment is frequently used but not always necessary. It is typically caused by bacteria but can also be caused by viruses. Signs and symptoms include:

- Pain
- Redness of the eardrum
- Pus in the ear
- Fever and headache
- Problems hearing
- Difficulty balancing

Otitis Media with Effusion

This is a build-up of fluid in the middle ear and will show no acute signs and symptoms of acute infection except problems with hearing. It is not painful and usually goes away on its own. Antibiotics are not useful with this type of infection. This may be caused by:

- Viral upper respiratory infection
- Allergies
- Exposure to irritants

Otitis Externa (Swimmers Ear)

It is an infection of the ear and /or outer ear canal. Antibiotics are usually needed to treat this type of infection. Signs and symptoms include:

- Ear feels itchy
- Redness and inflammation
- Painful to the touch or with head movement
- Pus draining from the ear

Seek a healthcare provider if:

- Temperature is higher than 100.4°F
- Discharge of blood or pus from the ear
- You have been diagnosed with an ear infection and symptoms do not improve

Treatment

- Rest
- Increase fluid intake
- Over-the-counter medications for pain, decongestants as needed.

* *Do not insert cotton swab in ear to release fluid.*

Contact Clarke Health Services at 563-588-6374 or your health care provider if you have any questions or problems.