



# Wellness News Network™

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## The Chiropractic Approach to Middle Ear Infection (Otitis Media)

Presented by: **Total Health Systems**

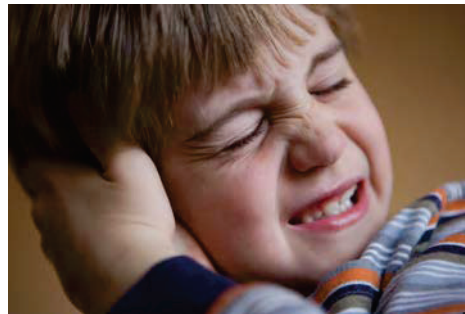
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### Introduction

Chiropractic has had a long and very successful history in treating non-spinal conditions in natural, noninvasive ways. Middle ear infection, also known as otitis media, is one such condition that chiropractors have historically treated using conservative methods. According to the American Chiropractic Association, otitis media affects about 10 million Americans every year, is particularly common in children, and is the No. 1 reason for visits to the pediatrician.<sup>1</sup> Most cases of otitis media are treated with antibiotics, though the infection is not always bacterial and the treatment efficacy is limited.

In fact, some research suggests that antibiotics are often not much more effective in treating otitis media than the body's own immune system.<sup>2</sup> Chiropractic care is becoming increasingly popular for otitis media care among parents of children experiencing this health problem. A 2004 case study published in the journal *Clinical Chiropractic* states that chiropractic care dramatically improved symptoms in a 3-year-old boy with otitis media - a relatively common experience among chiropractors and their young otitis media patients.<sup>3</sup>

Consider talking with your chiropractor about your child's ear infections. Your chiropractor is licensed and trained to detect and care for this often painful health problem.



### What is Otitis Media?

The three main types of ear infection are called acute otitis media, otitis media with effusion and otitis externa (aka Swimmer's Ear). Acute otitis media is the type of middle ear infection for which antibiotics are commonly prescribed and this infection is usually associated with pain, eardrum redness, ear pus and fever. Otitis media with effusion is an accumulation of fluid in the middle ear but without the signs and symptoms of acute otitis media. Otitis media with effusion is more common than acute otitis media and the build up of fluid in the middle ear is usually painless. This type of ear infection also usually fails to respond to antibiotic treatment. Otitis externa,

### QUESTION:

Which type of Otitis Media is referred to as Swimmer's Ear?

- A) Acute otitis media
- B) Otitis media with effusion
- C) Otitis externa

### ANSWER:

C) Otitis externa

### TRUE OR FALSE:

Otitis media with effusion is a usually painless build up of fluid in the middle ear

### ANSWER:

True

### QUESTION:

Of the 3 main types of ear infection which one is usually treated with antibiotics?

- A) Acute otitis media
- B) Otitis media with effusion
- C) Otitis externa

### ANSWER:

A) Acute otitis media

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or Swimmer's Ear, is an infection of the outer ear canal. This type of ear infection usually causes the following symptoms: ear itchiness, redness, swelling and pain. Any pressure placed on the ear may cause extreme pain.

## What Causes Otitis Media?

A blockage of the eustachian tube - the tube that links the nasal cavity and top of the throat to the middle ear - is one of the main underlying causes of otitis media, notes the University of Maryland Medical Center.<sup>4</sup> Nose and throat swelling and congestion, middle ear mucous membrane swelling and eustachian tube mucous membrane swelling can block the eustachian tube, which in turn allows fluid to accumulate in the middle ear. If the blockage persists, mucous membranes in the middle ear can become inflamed and their secretions thicker, which may compromise the middle ear's defense mechanisms and lead to otitis media.

## How Chiropractic Care Can Help

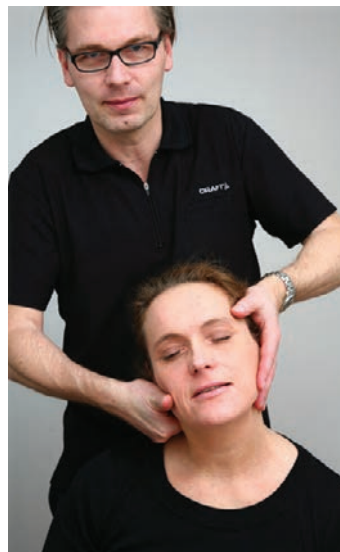
Chiropractic care, especially upper cervical adjustments, can encourage fluid drainage from the ear, reducing the likelihood of fluid build up and subsequent infection. Chiropractic adjustment of the occiput (back of the skull) and atlas (first cervical vertebra) may be particularly helpful for this health purpose. According to a study published in the *Journal of Clinical Chiropractic Pediatrics*, there is a strong correlation between chiropractic adjustments and the resolution of otitis media in children.<sup>5</sup>

Another study, published in the *Journal of Manipulative and Physiological*

*Therapeutics*, reports that chiropractic care may be helpful in reducing ear infection symptoms in young children.<sup>6</sup> A further study, still, published in 2003 in the journal *Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine*, notes that osteopathic manipulative treatment (similar to chiropractic adjustments) may be an effective complementary therapy in children who experience recurrent acute otitis media, and that this treatment approach may prevent or reduce both surgical intervention and antibiotic overuse.<sup>7</sup>

## Conclusion

Chiropractic care for middle ear infection is natural, conservative and often extremely helpful. Besides spinal adjustments, other natural therapies your chiropractor may employ to help treat otitis media include craniosacral therapy, herbal ear drops, immune support, nutrition counseling and soft tissue modalities, such lymphatic drainage or an endonasal procedure. Your chiropractor is a total body health expert who possesses many treatment tools to address both spinal and non-spinal health problems. Chat with your chiropractor to learn more about his or her approach to middle ear infection..



## Quote to Inspire

*“Happy is the hearing man; unhappy the speaking man.”*

*Ralph Waldo Emerson*

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