



Otitis Media

Differentiate acute otitis media from middle ear effusion

Acute Otitis Media (AOM)

Diagnosis requires all three of the following:

1. Recent onset of symptoms;
2. Middle ear effusion (bulging tympanic membrane (TM), limited mobility of TM, air fluid level behind TM, otorrhea);
3. Signs or symptoms of inflammation (erythema of TM or otalgia).

Management - AOM

For children with mild cases of uncomplicated AOM, >2 years of age, without a perforated tympanic membrane, consider treating symptomatically with topical or systemic analgesia (acetaminophen or ibuprofen) and reassessing if not improved in 48-72 hours.

Amoxicillin remains as efficacious as newer drugs: 80–90 mg/kg/day, divided bid (maximum dose 2–3 gm/day) for 5 days (10 days if <6 years). Consider ceftriaxone if vomiting.

If no improvement in 48–72 hours, amoxicillin-clavulanate* 14:1 80–90 mg/kg/day, divided bid.

Other treatment alternatives: cefdinir, cefpodoxime, cefuroxime.

For severe penicillin allergies (hives or anaphylaxis): azithromycin or clarithromycin.

For repeated treatment failure consider:
1. Tympanocentesis for culture/susceptibility,
2. Consultation with ENT.

*May use standard formulation of amoxicillin-clavulanate mixed with additional amoxicillin, or high-dose amoxicillin formulation of amoxicillin-clavulanate.

Middle Ear Effusion (MEE)

Signs/symptoms:

- Effusion present
- Immobility of tympanic membrane
- No symptoms or signs of acute infection
- Non-specific symptoms and signs (rhinorrhea, low-grade fever, cough, diarrhea, etc.) may be present

Management - MEE

Antibiotics are not indicated.

Meta-analysis of all known studies showed only marginal short-term benefit of antibiotics.

Antibiotic prophylaxis contributes to resistance and should be used infrequently.

For persistent effusion ≥ 3 months consider: 1. Hearing evaluation, 2. Consultation with ENT.

These guidelines were produced in collaboration with the Infectious Diseases Society of Oregon.

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