

MEDIA RELEASE

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Ear infections in children don't always need antibiotics

Ear infections are common in children under the age of six, but they will often clear up on their own without antibiotics, say Dr Peter Morris and Dr Amanda Leach of the Menzies School of Health Research in Darwin, writing in the December edition of *Australian Prescriber*.

While children with these symptoms should be taken to a GP for diagnosis, parents should not be concerned if the doctor does not prescribe antibiotics or suggests they wait and see what happens before having a script dispensed.

“Most children will experience at least one ear infection during their early years. The symptoms include pain and sometimes fever, and occasionally hearing loss or ear discharge,” the authors write.

“Rather than taking antibiotics straight away, children may be given pain relief medicine. Pain will usually subside within one or two days, in which case antibiotics would not be needed.”

“Parents should be advised by the GP of the likely course of the illness and what symptoms to look out for. In some cases, such as babies, antibiotics will be necessary, but most ear infections will get better without specific treatment,” the authors conclude.

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