

HEALTHY LIVING

Wellness Newsletter from **AAOA**

MAY 2015



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Ear Infections in Children

When little ears are infected, parents want to know what's best.

In some cases, antibiotics are needed. But, doctors want parents to know: These strong medicines aren't always necessary. And, they may pose risks of their own.

COMMON QUESTIONS

Q. What causes ear infections?

A. An ear infection is inflammation in the middle ear. It's often caused by bacteria or viruses and occurs after fluid builds up behind the eardrum. It often develops after a child has had a cold, sore throat or other illness.

If an ear becomes infected, it can cause pain and fever.* Doctors call this acute otitis media.

Q. When should a child be treated with antibiotics?

A. First, a doctor should confirm with an exam that an ear is infected. Not all earaches are infections. If an ear is infected, the doctor can consider certain factors to decide whether antibiotics are necessary, such as the severity of the infection and a child's age.

For some children, doctors may suggest waiting a few days before starting antibiotics. This may give the infection time to clear up on its own. In fact, up to 80% of children will get better without treatment, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Q. Why not use antibiotics anyway?

A. Antibiotics work only on bacteria. So, they won't help in those cases where an infection is caused by a virus.

And, overusing antibiotics makes them less effective. Over time, bacteria can build up resistance to these medicines that may make future infections harder to treat.

Antibiotics can also lead to side effects. For example, they may cause diarrhea, rashes and stomach upset.

Q. How can I help my child feel better in the meantime?

A. An over-the-counter pain reliever, such as ibuprofen or acetaminophen,

may help. These medicines work faster for pain than antibiotics.

But, for safety's sake, make sure you know what products and doses are OK for your child. It's best to ask about this during a well-child visit. Get it in writing — so you'll have the information when you need it.

Always read the package directions to be sure you're giving a medicine properly. Ask your doctor or pharmacist if you have questions about how to use it.

One important caution: Don't give cough and cold medicines to children younger than 2 years old. There's a risk of life-threatening side effects for this age group. Do not give these medicines to any child without checking with the doctor first.

*If an infant younger than 12 weeks has a rectal temperature above 100.4° F, call your doctor or seek medical care right away. This also applies to children of any age with chronic medical conditions, such as heart or lung disease or a weak immune system, who have fever or other signs of illness.

#1 Ear infection is the top reason why kids go see the doctor.



75% of children have had at least one ear infection by the time they turn 3 years old.*

*Source: National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders

Orange-Avocado Salad

INGREDIENTS:

Salad

8 cups mixed salad greens
1 cup orange segments
1 avocado, peeled and diced
1/4 cup slivered red onion
1/2 cup dressing

Dressing

1 cup packed fresh cilantro
1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
1/3 cup lime juice
1/3 cup orange juice
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon pepper
1 clove of minced garlic

Nutrition Facts

Yields 4 Servings

Amount Per Serving

Calories 186

Fiber 6g

Fat 14g

Protein 2g

Sodium 142mg

Carbohydrates 13g

PREPARATION:

Puree cilantro, olive oil, lime juice, orange juice, salt, pepper and garlic in a blender or food processor until smooth. Toss salad ingredients together and gently mix in 1/2 cup of the dressing.



Temporary Tattoos: Not Without Risk

A short-lived henna tattoo may seem innocent enough. An artist - perhaps at a fair, boardwalk or salon - paints on body art that fades in a matter of days or weeks.

But, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) urges consumers to be cautious. The skin-staining products used for these creations can cause allergic reactions and in some cases, scarring.

What's in the mix?

What causes skin rashes is often the unsafe color additives in henna

products. That's been the case with black henna for some people, including children. They've had redness, bumps and blisters from their tattoos. For a few, the reactions have left permanent scars. Reactions can happen immediately or take up to three weeks to develop.

In many states, no one regulates the temporary tattoo business. So, before you consider a henna tattoo, ask questions about the products the artist uses, says the FDA. And, especially avoid those with the additive PPD (p-phenylenediamine). It's a

common ingredient in hair dye. But, it isn't approved for use on the skin.

If you have skin irritation from a temporary tattoo, see your doctor. The FDA also asks that you report it to MedWatch. It's the FDA's program for reporting adverse reactions.



Improve Your Commute - *in little* or **BIG** ways

Coming and going. For many of us, it's an unavoidable part of every workday. For U.S. workers, the average one-way trip takes about 25 minutes. Over 8% have travel times of 60 minutes or longer each way.*

If your commute is a chore, a bore or a sore subject, consider these tips. Of course, what works for you will depend on a number of factors, such as your mode of travel and the distance. But, you may find an idea or two here — big or small — to improve your daily trips.

It's the little things

If you're driving, these steps may be a welcome change:

Up the pleasant factor. You can't control rush hour. But, you can influence what goes on inside your car. Listen to soothing tunes or an audio book. Or, just relish the daily quiet time — and focus on the journey.

Create a haven of sorts.

Keep your vehicle tidy. Trash and clutter may be adding to your stress.

Fend off frustration. Stuck in stop-and-go traffic? Stay calm by practicing deep breathing every time your foot is on the brake.

Allow yourself a buffer.

Are you always in a hurry? Make a point of leaving home 10 minutes earlier. You'll be giving yourself the gift of more time and less stress.

Take the road less traveled.

Look into alternate routes you could try when time allows. It may not always be practical. But, skipping the freeway frenzy on certain days may free you from aggravation — and help you discover new places. Another plus: It may offer you a good "Plan B" if there's a major traffic jam.

Think big

To really shake up your commute,

consider one of these moves:

Pool your resources. Ask friends or colleagues if they'd like to share rides. Carpooling reduces your time behind the wheel, as well as congestion on the road. Plus, you'll save on gas — and possibly parking, too.

Catch a bus, train or trolley.

If available, try out public transit. You may find you enjoy that time to read — or just relax.

Go for pedal power. If you have a reasonably short and safe commute, consider biking — or even walking.** It's a three-for-one special: You'll get where you're going. You'll fit in regular exercise. And, you'll be doing something nice for the environment, too.

*U.S. Census Bureau, 2011.

**Talk with your doctor before significantly increasing your activity level.

Mental Health Information

May is Mental Health Awareness Month

Since 1949, May has been Mental Health Awareness Month. The goals are to encourage people to get treatment and to reduce the stigma around mental health conditions.

One in 4 Americans will have a mental health condition at some point. So it's important that everyone understand:

- These are common and real conditions. They're not "just in your head."
- If untreated, they can have serious results.
- There are treatments that work. And people can lead full lives in recovery.

Remember, mental well-being is more than the absence of illness. It includes having a positive emotional attitude. It helps you:

- Focus at work
- Cope with life's obstacles
- Get along with others
- Stay healthy



AAOA HEALTHCARE
www.myaaobenefits.com
www.aaomerica.org
www.aaohaalthcare.org

Who can I talk to about mental health issues?

If you are struggling with an emotional problem, a mental health professional can help. Many different types of professionals offer psychotherapy (talk therapy). Some can also prescribe medication if needed.

Psychiatrists

A psychiatrist is a medical or osteopathic doctor with special training in the diagnosis and treatment of mental and emotional illnesses. Like other doctors, psychiatrists can prescribe medication. A psychiatrist should have a state medical license and be board-eligible or board-certified by the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology.

Psychologists

A psychologist has an advanced degree from an accredited graduate program in psychology and two or more years of supervised work experience. Most states require a doctoral degree and a state license for psychologists. Psychologists can make diagnoses, do psychological testing, and provide therapy.

Licensed professional counselors

A licensed professional counselor has a master's degree in psychology, counseling or a related field. Licensed counselors are trained to diagnose and treat mental and emotional disorders. They are required to have a state license.

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MAY WELLNESS TIP



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Wellness Tip

Time to Disconnect

Your phone is your right hand man. You check it regularly for messages, you keep your schedule on your phone; you even use it as an alarm clock. It is safe to say that that you do everything with your phone. Try to relax by shutting off your phone when you go to bed. This will help you achieve a great night's rest.

We want your feed-back about the Wellness Newsletter. Please e-mail us at wellness@aaomerica.org with any wellness tips or healthy recipe ideas.