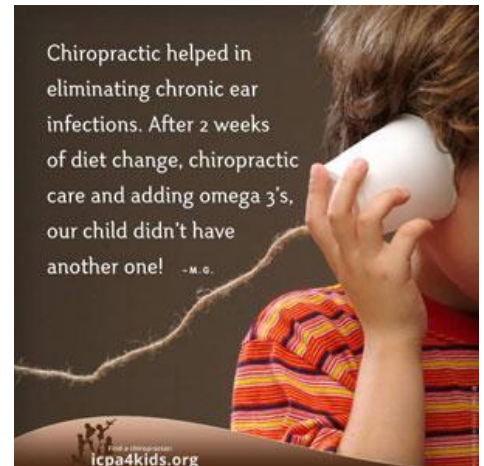


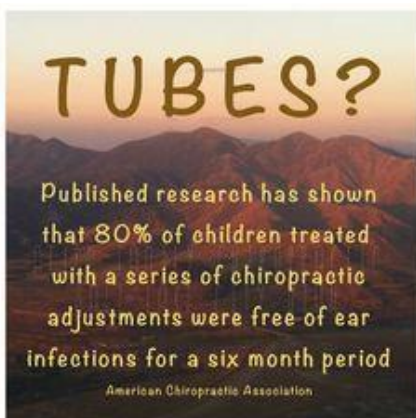
Helping Ear Infections... How?!?

Ear infections are the 2nd most diagnosed illness in children, only surpassed by the common cold. Chiropractic treatment often provides relief, or ends long-standing battles with ear infections. Many people struggle to connect the dots between the two, so let's shed some light on how chiropractors can help!

What and Why?: Otitis Media (ear infection) can be caused by many things, including but not limited to: viral or bacterial intruders, allergies (dairy, wheat, or sugar, most commonly), mechanical obstruction, nutritional deficiency, birth trauma, pacifier use after 10 months of age, and iatrogenic/medical causes. Otitis media is even listed as a side effect of some vaccines. Children born by cesarean and formula fed are also at a greater risk due to decreased immune system strength as an infant. Children are more prone to ear infections than adults because their Eustachian tubes (connecting the ear to the throat) are horizontal, not angled, like an adult. This makes drainage more difficult. Throat inflammation or congestion of the cervical lymph nodes can easily close off the Eustachian tube, causing a buildup of pressure and pain.



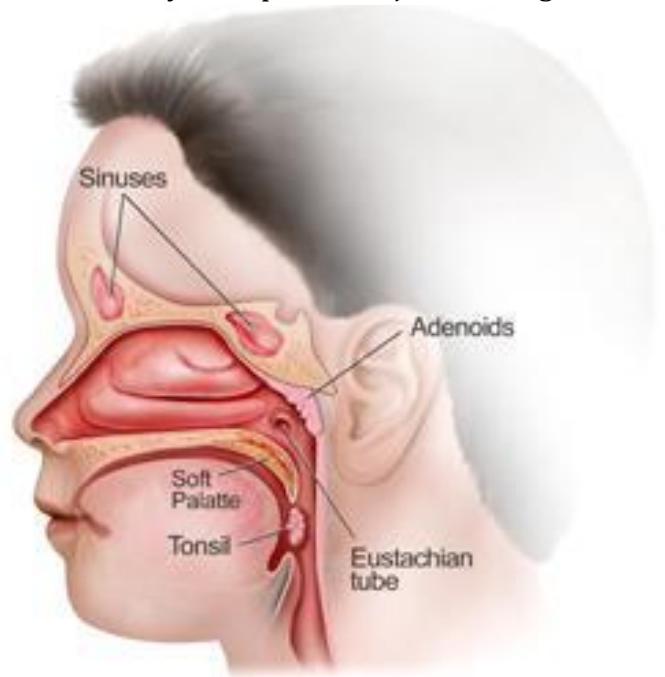
Common Treatment: The American Academy of Pediatrics advises a watch and wait approach to ear infections (wait a few days, and see if it goes away), however only about 20% of medical pediatricians follow this recommendation. More commonly, parents are sent home with antibiotic prescriptions that may or may not be effective depending on the type of infection. Antibiotics only work on bacterial, not viral, infections. This is unfortunate because the *majority* of ear infections are viral in nature. Additionally, antibiotics are not an effective treatment if the cause is allergy, obstruction, or trauma related. Even in the rare case of a bacterial infection, 80-90% will resolve on their own in 4-7 days. Although antibiotics may (or may not) speed healing by a few days, they can have some unfortunate side effects. These include upset stomach, diarrhea, nausea, oral thrush, diaper rash, and allergic reactions. Antibiotic use also increases susceptibility to NEW ear infections by weakening the microbiome in the gut, which contains 75% of the immune system. So, if the illness is NOT caused by bacteria all of these side effects may be experienced without the benefit of symptom relief.



Another common intervention for otitis is the insertion of tubes in the tympanic membrane. These can backfire as well, as the body often treats tubes as foreign objects and forces them out before they can serve their purpose. No doctor wants to put a child through unnecessary surgery, so this treatment is often used as a last resort after several rounds of antibiotics.

Less Invasive Options: So how does chiropractic play into all of this?! Chiropractic addresses otitis from multiple angles. First, let's talk about mechanical obstruction. Chiropractors can assess and adjust the cervical spine, jaw, and skull. Decreased motion in these areas can cause fluid build up around the eardrum by causing cervical lymph node congestion. Muscles surrounding the Eustachian tube opening in the throat (levator palatine and tensor veli palatine for you nerds out there!), contract to help open the tube. The nerves that control these muscles originate in the neck (our specialty!). If these nerves don't work because of a subluxated neck, the tube may not be able to open. Your child likely acquired their first subluxation at birth (after all, even natural birth is pretty traumatic), and a few along the way from bumps, falls, and sleeping in funny scrunched positions. Additionally chiropractic adjustments give the **WHOLE** body a good immune system boost to help fight infections.

For those of you who need some extra proof, recent studies have supported chiropractic care for otitis in children. In a recent study in the Journal of Clinical Chiropractic Pediatrics, 80% of children with previous ear infections did not experience another ear infection within a 6 month period of receiving a chiropractic adjustment. This is especially encouraging for kids who have experienced multiple infections!



Nutritional Support: Dietary changes can also help your kiddo kick an infection. During symptomatic times (or all the time, if you can) eliminate added sugars and processed foods. Decreasing or temporarily eliminating wheat, dairy, and orange juice can also speed up healing time by decreasing mucous production and inflammation. Pairing additional supplements with chiropractic care can help tame symptoms and speed up recovery time, including: natural ear drops (unless ear drum has ruptured), probiotics, vitamin D (mom can increase her intake if breastfeeding), and vitamin C.

Chiropractic adjustments help to remove interference from the nervous system by correcting misalignments in the spine and cranial bones. There are no drugs, tubes, surgery, or harmful side effects. It works by decreasing inflammation, improving nerve signals, reducing muscle tension, and establishing proper blood flow and lymph drainage. **Chiropractic allows the child's body to heal itself, which builds up his or her immune system rather than breaking it down.** Chiropractic care is non-invasive and does not have any dangerous side effects. All patients, but especially children, should be treated with the least invasive measure first, to avoid unnecessary harm, and in the case of ear infections, chiropractic care is about as non-invasive as it gets.

So next time you suspect your little one has an ear infection, get them to Back In Line so we can help them structurally and nutritionally!

Resources:

<http://www.nytimes.com/ref/health/healthguide/esn-earinfections-ess.html>, <http://www.askdrsears.com/topics/health-concerns/childhood-illnesses/ear-infections>, <http://www.healthychild.com/chiropractic-for-chronic-ear-infections/>, <http://newbeginningschiropractic.net/chiropractic-approach-to-childhood-ear-infections/>
Fallon JM. The Role of the Chiropractic Adjustment in the Care and Treatment of 332 Children with Otitis Media. *Journal of Clinical Chiropractic Pediatrics*. 1997; Volume 2, No. 2:167-183.; Coulter ID. Efficacy and Risks of Chiropractic Manipulation: What Does the Evidence Suggest? *Integrative Medicine* 1998;1:61-66