

The New Guidelines

A recent observation published by the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Academy of Family Physicians advocates the “wait and watch” approach for all cases of earaches.



- Each course of antibiotics given to a child can make future infections more difficult to treat. The result is an increase in the use of a larger range of – and generally more expensive – antibiotics. In addition, the benefit of antibiotics for Acute Otitis Media is small on average and must be balanced against potential harm of therapy.
- About 15 percent of children who take antibiotics suffer from diarrhea or vomiting and up to 5 percent have allergic reactions, which can be serious or life threatening. The resistant bacteria in a child can be passed to siblings, other family members, neighbors, and peers in group-care or school settings.
- The New Guidelines set by the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Academy of Family Physicians provide an “**option to observe** for select children and only start antibiotic treatment if symptoms have not improved in 48-72 hours”.
- Approximately 80 percent of children with Acute Otitis Media get better **without** antibiotics. And children whose ear infections are not treated immediately with antibiotics are not likely to develop a serious illness.

*Source: American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Academy of Family Physicians
Questions and Answers on Acute Otitis Media March 9, 2004
<http://www.aap.org/advocacy/releases/aomqa.htm>
[emphasis added]*