



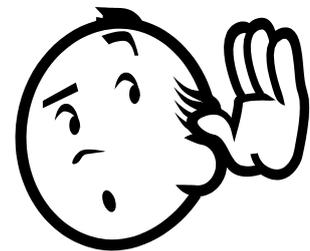
CHILDHOOD FLUCTUATING CONDUCTIVE HEARING LOSS ('GLUE EAR')

WHAT IS IT?

Childhood fluctuating conductive deafness is usually caused by ear infections known medically as OTITIS MEDIA ('glue ear'), but conductive hearing loss can be present WITHOUT infection.

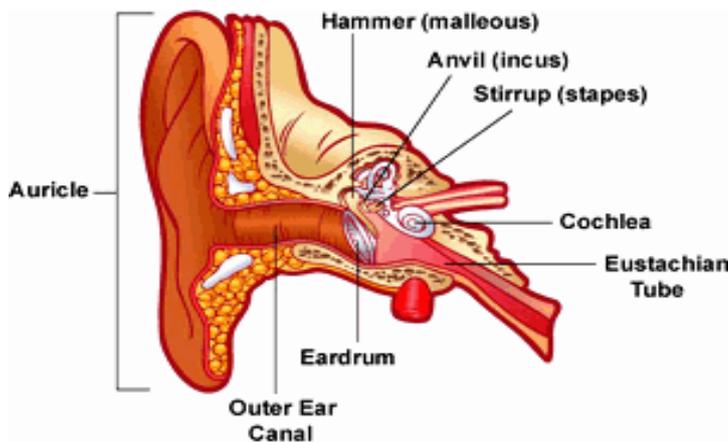
Remember, fluctuating conductive hearing loss can recur.

*can't
'They ~~can~~ hear when they
want to!'*



WHAT IS 'GLUE EAR'?

It is a collection of fluid in the middle ear cavity. The middle ear is usually air filled, which allows the ear drum to move and transmit sound waves through the middle ear via the ossicles (bones) to the inner ear (cochlea). The air gets to the middle ear via the Eustachian tube which connects the middle ear to the back of the nose.



CAUSES OF 'GLUE EAR'

There are many causes of glue ear including: colds, allergies, post viral infections, enlarged adenoids, following middle ear infections, laying baby down immediately after feeding, environmental tobacco smoke, and air travel when you have a stuffy nose or cold.

WHAT SIGNS SHOULD I LOOK FOR?

- Upset by shouting voices / loud noise
- Poor school performance
- Loneliness
- Bullying behaviour
- Clumsiness
- Can't remember instructions
- Poor speech development
- Disobedience
- Day dreaming

HOW DOES 'GLUE EAR' AFFECT HEARING?

If there is a small amount of fluid in the middle ear, hearing may fluctuate. If fluid has been in the middle ear for some time the fluid gets thick and sticky (hence the term 'glue ear') and the hearing becomes more impaired. Sound is distorted and the volume is decreased.

HOW IS 'GLUE EAR' TREATED?

The cause is treated. Generally, it is important to try to minimise the mucous in the upper respiratory system. This can be assisted by lots of nose blowing, drinking lots of water, and teaching your child to breathe through their nose.

Antibiotics are usually only prescribed when there is an acute infection. Your Doctor or Ear Nose and Throat specialist will investigate the cause of the fluid build-up. Sometimes, grommets (ventilation tubes) may be necessary.

PREVALENCE

Fluctuating conductive hearing loss accounts for almost 90% of all hearing loss in children.

1 in 3 young school aged children will have undetected conductive hearing loss. Undetected hearing loss can be present in children with other problems such as visual impairment, Down syndrome, and developmental disorders. Children from indigenous backgrounds, those who are exposed to environmental tobacco smoke, who suffer asthma, or have a family history of conductive hearing loss are at greater risk.

WHAT TO DO....

Early detection is essential. Have your child's hearing tested by qualified Audiometry Nurses at your nearest Community Health Centre. If hearing problems are detected, your hearing health practitioner may suggest you obtain a referral from your GP to see an Ear Nose and Throat specialist.

IF KIDS HEAR BETTER THEY LEARN BETTER



For more information, or to arrange a hearing test contact your local community health centre: