

NATURAL CURES FOR KIDS

— BY AMY ZINTI

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CHIROPRACTIC ADJUSTMENT FOR CHRONIC EAR INFECTIONS:

Recurring ear infections (called otitis media or OM) account for over 35 percent of all pediatrician visits in the United States. The infections can be bacterial or viral, but the only available treatment is antibiotics. Whether it helps clear up infections or not, the prescription does little to prevent them from coming back. (In fact, some research indicates that antibiotics may even contribute to future infections by creating drug-resistant germs.)

A damp middle ear is an optimal living environment for recurrent infections. A child can have surgery to implant a tube to drain the middle ear and help prevent infections while it's in place, usually for one to two years. But the procedure has limited success, is invasive and usually requires general anesthesia.

Chiropractic care is thought to prevent recurrent infections by correcting misalignments (called subluxations) and allowing normal fluid drainage from the middle ear. One study evaluated chiropractic adjustments on more than three hundred children, most of whom had several infections that were less than six months apart. Kids with mild infections were given three to five treatments to the cervical vertebrae, or base of the skull. (Acute cases were referred for conventional treatment.) The treated children's infections cleared in an average of seven to nine days—which might have happened without chiropractic adjustments or antibiotics. Most notable, however, is that six months after their initial visit, 80 percent of the children had not suffered a recurrence. During this time, some children received three to four maintenance adjustments; others required none (as determined by the practitioner).

If your child already has an ear infection, see your pediatrician—in many cases, he'll need a course of antibiotics. If your child is between ear infections and his doctor suggests ear-tube surgery, ask if you can try chiropractic treatment first. The pressure chiropractors apply when treating children is extremely light, so your child should feel no discomfort. * *Health reporter Amy Zinti writes for Parents magazine and is also a mom.*