

DISCHARGING EARS

SYMPTOM OF AN EAR INFECTION:



thick "pus" coming of the ears



smelly ears



blood stained discharge out of the ear



frank blood coming out of the ear



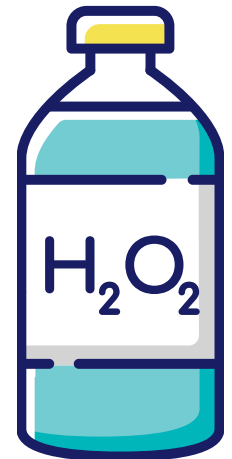
NO HEAD UNDER WATER
Whilst the ear is discharging avoid getting the ear wet.

Discharge out of the ears is a symptom of an ear infection.

IF THERE IS A LARGE VOLUME OF EAR DISCHARGE, PERFORM AN EAR TOILET:

- 1 Clean the outer ear if covered in discharge (clean moist face washer).
- 2 Use a cotton tip to "scoop" the discharge out of the ear canal. Don't insert the cotton tip into the ear canal as it will push the discharge into the ear.
- 3 Apply Hydrogen Peroxide 3% via a medicine dropper to the affected ear (a good "squirt", excess will run down the side of the face). Hydrogen peroxide bubbles in the ear, if this is distressing for the child avoid using. Hydrogen peroxide helps break down the discharge.
- 4 After using Hydrogen Peroxide, mop up the residual discharge and hydrogen peroxide with tissue spears. Tissue spears are a corner of tissue twisted into a "spear". Push the tissue spear into the ear canal to dry the ear canal.

Adjust how much of the above steps are performed based on what your child tolerates. If using antibiotic ear drops, always try to perform the above steps prior to instilling the drops. This will help the antibiotic drops actually get into the ear (versus sitting on layer of discharge).



MEDICAL TREATMENT

Consider oral antibiotics if the child has the following:

- generally unwell ie fever, flat, irritable
- large volume of ear discharge
- severe pain in the ear
- ear discharge associated with significant nasal discharge

Consider topical ear drop antibiotics (Ciloxan) if the following are present:

- offensive smell. The smell is from a specific bacteria that will only be treated by ear drops.
- large volume discharge
- blood stained or frank blood discharge from the ear

In some cases, both oral antibiotics and drops are used at the same time.

Some children suffer frequent discharge that requires prophylactic antibiotics.

Occasionally the discharge does not get better with the above treatment. In those cases, contact your ENT surgeon. Modifications to the treatment may be needed. Very rarely, the grommets may need to be removed to settle the infection.

An alternative to Hydrogen Peroxide 3% (if not tolerated) is Betadine 1ml mixed with 20mls of sterile water or saline. 3mls of the solution is flushed into the ear to wash out the discharge (it will run out of the ear). TIP always ensure it is body temperature, otherwise it will cause discomfort and dizziness.

