Otitis Media

Description
Otitis media is an infection in the middle ear. It usually occurs following infection of the throat, sinuses or nose.

Precipitating Factors
- Viral or bacterial infection which spreads to middle ear by way of Eustachian tube
- Sinus/Eustachian tube blockage by allergies or enlarged adenoids
- A ruptured eardrum

Risk Factors
- Recent respiratory infection
- Change in altitude
- Cold climate

Frequent signs and symptoms
- Ear ache
- Feeling of fullness in ear
- Hearing loss
- Fever
- Discharge or leakage from the ear

General Ear Care
- Treatment usually involves following a medication plan and supportive care to relieve pain
- Apply heat (i.e. - warm pack, heating pad) to area around ears to relieve pain. Be careful not to burn yourself
- Avoid swimming or getting ears wet until infection clears
- Never put Q-tips, swabs, bobby pins or other foreign objects in the ear canal

Medication
Your Health Care Provider may prescribe:
- Tylenol, Aspirin, Ibuprofen to reduce pain and fever
- Antibiotics if the infection appears to be bacterial rather than viral.
- Finish all the medication as the infection may remain active for several days after symptoms disappear

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For questions or concerns, call the Telephone Care Program
1-800-455-0057
Expected Outcome

- Curable with treatment
- Possible complications: may recur or develop into chronic otitis media

Return to ER if:

- Fever develops greater than 102
- Severe headache
- Earache that persists longer than 2 days despite treatment
- Increased swelling or redness around the ear
- Dizziness

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