

Acute otitis media

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Acute otitis media (AOM) is one of the most common childhood illnesses with a peak incidence between 6 and 18 months of age. It has occurred in 70% of children by the age of 2 and in 90% by the age of 6. It is characterised by purulent fluid in the middle ear. The tympanic membrane bulges because of pressure from the pus in the middle ear (Figure 51.17). The child suffers pain, fever and lethargy . The most common infecting organisms are *Streptococcus pneumoniae* and *Haemophilus influenzae* . Treatment is with analgesics and antipyretics. Systemic antibiotics should be reserved for children under 2 years with bilateral disease or those with other risk factors for complications. The most common complication is mastoiditis because the mastoid air cells connect freely with the middle ear space. Mastoiditis (Figure 51.18) requires hospital admission for intravenous antibiotics, for consideration of CT scanning - and to monitor for complications such as facial nerve palsy , lateral sinus thrombosis and meningitis. If infection does not resolve quickly abscess aspiration and myringotomy (with/ without grommet insertion) is performed. A cortical mastoid - ectomy is carried out if complications arise. Acute otitis media

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