

# The Haven Practice

## **EARACHE**

Ear infections are very common in young children. It is usually triggered by a viral infection like a cough or cold, when fluid builds up behind the ear drum.

Sometimes the fluid can become infected with bacteria. The pressure builds up which can be painful, eventually the ear drum can burst which relieves the pressure and pain. The hole in the ear drum usually heals quickly.

Most ear infections clear up within 3 days without antibiotics.

### **Symptoms:**

- Earache
- Deafness
- Temperature over 38C
- Discharge from the ear

### **Treatment:**

- Take regular painkillers. You can alternate Paracetamol and Ibuprofen if necessary.
- Try not to lie down too flat
- Try a warm towel or heat pad to the ear
- Steam inhalation may be helpful

### **To help prevent ear infections in children:**

- Stop dummies at 6 months
- Breastfeed for as long as you can
- Do not smoke around your child
- If they have a bottle, sit them up when they feed

There is evidence to suggest that persistent ear infections may respond to the use of a nose balloon. A device called Otovent helps you to blow up a balloon using your nose, which may help to clear the fluid behind the ear.

### **Complications:**

### **Contact the Doctor if:**

- Earache lasts more than 3 days

- You develop photophobia, neck stiffness or a severe headache
- Any inflammation or pain behind the ear
- You have repeated ear infections.