

# PATIENT EDUCATION HANDOUT

## Middle Ear Infection: How OMT Can Help

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Middle ear infections, also known as acute otitis media (AOM), is an infection behind the eardrum. Common symptoms include fever, earache, fullness in the ear, ear drainage, trouble hearing and headaches. Children are more likely to get AOM than adults due to their anatomy. In children, symptoms may include ear tugging, fussiness, difficulty sleeping, changes to activity and decreased oral intake. The diagnosis of AOM requires a physical exam and viewing the ear using an otoscope. Bacteria or viruses can cause AOM. Symptoms related to ear infections may resolve on their own in a few days, while some ear infections require antibiotics to resolve. Your provider may recommend close observation, over the counter medicines and/or prescribe antibiotics depending on your medical history, symptoms and exam findings.

### **HOW CAN OMT HELP WITH MIDDLE EAR INFECTIONS?**

Osteopathic manipulative therapy (OMT) is a hands-on technique to diagnose and treat various medical conditions. It can be used to complement medical and surgical management in the treatment and prevention of AOM. Two commonly used techniques are the Galbreath Maneuver and Auricular Drainage Technique.

#### **Galbreath Maneuver OMT Technique:**

- This treatment works on the eustachian tube, which connects the middle ear to the back of the nose
- Your provider will make small guide movements of the jaw
- This will increase fluid drainage from the middle ear through the eustachian tube

#### **Auricular Drainage OMT Technique:**

- This treatment works on the skin and muscles around the ear
- Your provider will put guided pressure and rotate the skin and soft tissue around the ear in a clockwise and counterclockwise manner
- This maneuver can help relieve lymphatic congestion around the ear

Your provider may use many other techniques targeted towards the head, neck and ribs to treat and prevent AOM. Please discuss with your osteopathic physician if you have any questions regarding treatment for AOM.

### **WHERE CAN YOU GET OMT?**

You will need to locate a Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (DO) to obtain OMT. These are physicians who attended four years of medical school and have additional medical training to perform OMT. Use [osteopathic.org](http://osteopathic.org) to locate an osteopathic physician in your area.



**SOURCE(S):** *Atlas of Osteopathic Techniques; American Family Physician*

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