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Middle Ear Infection - Otitis Media

This is more serious and much more painful than an outer ear infection, since they are much more difficult to resolve. In addition, middle ear infections can cause severe neurological symptoms including head tilts and seizures. Middle ear infection may result from a sinus infection, neck pain, and possibly an outer ear infection that caused the eardrum to rupture. Deafness can also result from these infections.

These infections are difficult to resolve since the eardrum can regrow and trap the infection behind the ear drum. Occasionally ear infection can require major surgery to correct and remove the infection.

These are some of the treatment options that we may recommend for middle ear infections:

1. Ear flush - These are generally performed with anesthesia or heavy sedation. This allows us to flush the pus/debris out of the middle ear and infused medication into the ear. These flushes generally have the best results if they are performed every 2 weeks until the infection is resolved. We have had patients that required ear flushing every 2 weeks for 9 months.
2. Topical medications- Medications are placed in the ear 1-3 times per day. Many times, these are difficult to administer since the middle ear infections are so painful.
3. Oral cortisone (prednisone)- This helps reduce inflammation and allows the ear medication to penetrate and be more effective. This cannot be given with rimadyl as this may cause stomach ulcers.
4. Oral antibiotics or oral antifungal medication may be recommended for this infection. Cultures or cytology may be performed to evaluate the type of infection.
5. Pain medications may help with discomfort after a flush, and may make it easier for you to place the ear medications in the ears. We will recommend tramadol.
6. Ear tubes are sometimes placed to allow us to continue medicating the ear and allow the pus to continue to drain from the middle ear.
7. Surgery to remove the ear canal and inner ear is sometimes required to resolve these infections.
8. We recommend massage therapy of the neck and shoulders on a regular basis.