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00:00:00.017 --> 00:00:05.957

I'm Holly Wayment, and this is Pediatrics Now. Today, we're talking about ear infections.

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I'm so excited today because joining me here in our podcast studio are Drs.

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Erica Scher and Nadine Haeckel, Pediatric Ear, Nose, and Throat Doctors at University

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00:00:17.757 --> 00:00:21.477

Health and the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio.

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00:00:21.717 --> 00:00:24.837

Thank you so much for being here today on Pediatrics Now.

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00:00:25.217 --> 00:00:30.917

Thank you for having us. Yes. You were drawn to this specialty because you love

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00:00:30.917 --> 00:00:35.197

children and the child patient, not necessarily the adult.

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00:00:35.357 --> 00:00:38.837

Yep. Yep. That's exactly it. I think kids are much better as patients.

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I'm not particularly a fan of having adults as patients just from like previous

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training, but I knew I was going to work with kids even well before medical school.

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00:00:47.957 --> 00:00:50.317

So it was a no brainer. It was always going to end up there.

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00:00:50.357 --> 00:00:51.997

The question is in which realm.

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00:00:51.997 --> 00:00:58.137

So, and Erica, you as well, you love kids and, and you also both were drawn

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00:00:58.137 --> 00:01:04.697

to the kindness you saw, the people who were training you at the time, the other doctors.

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00:01:32.197 --> 00:01:36.237

And I think generally most people, regardless of what, you know,

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00:01:36.237 --> 00:01:41.257

whether they need general ENT or some other specialty in ENT,

00:02:00.577 --> 00:02:02.657
So it can really impact a person.

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00:02:05.877 --> 00:02:09.437
You can have fu without having an ear infection. You have to have fuid to

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00:02:09.437 --> 00:02:16.117
have a bacterial ear infection. but we can see viral, kind of like a viral picture

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00:02:16.117 --> 00:02:18.357
where a kid has an upper respiratory infection.

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00:02:18.437 --> 00:02:21.037
They're complaining of maybe some ear pain. They have fevers.

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00:02:21.037 --> 00:02:23.877
When you look in the ear, the eardrum may or may not be a little red,

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00:02:24.037 --> 00:02:27.977
but if there's no fuid behind there, that is a situation where I wouldn't necessarily

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00:02:27.977 --> 00:02:29.957

jump to prescribing antibiotics.

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00:03:21.483 --> 00:03:25.823

but just something to kind of be aware of that you don't have to treat that type of fuid either.

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00:03:25.963 --> 00:03:29.963

And so it's okay if that fuid is present for what's normal for it to be. It is. It is.

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00:03:30.563 --> 00:03:33.803

By nature, young children have poor eustachian tube function.

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00:03:34.303 --> 00:03:37.683

It's just the nature of what they think is the length of the eustachian tube

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00:03:37.683 --> 00:03:39.123

and the orientation of it.

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00:03:39.183 --> 00:03:42.463

And as we get older, it tends to get a little longer and it's thought to become

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00:03:42.463 --> 00:03:44.583

more vertical. So it functions a little bit better.

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00:03:44.843 --> 00:03:48.903

And so that's why we sort of say kids outgrow their ear infection problems,

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00:03:48.903 --> 00:03:52.723

Usually around age five to six, because that's when we see those changes in the eustachian tube.

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00:03:53.043 --> 00:03:56.823

So younger kids, truthfully, that's just the nature of their ears.

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00:03:58.303 --> 00:04:03.343

Depending on what their symptoms are, you can sometimes try allergy medications for them.

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00:04:03.443 --> 00:04:08.483

I will be honest, though, our guidelines actually recommend against using that in young kids.

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00:04:08.743 --> 00:04:12.203

So I wouldn't do that unless they have separate allergy-related symptoms.

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00:04:12.203 --> 00:04:14.943

So things like antihistamines or nasal sprays.

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00:04:15.543 --> 00:04:19.223

Older kids, though, so we start to think about in kids six and older,

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00:04:19.363 --> 00:04:22.683

if they're really still having eustachian tube issues, a lot of ear infections

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00:04:22.683 --> 00:04:28.003

or ear pain, then it is generally thought to be more of an allergy-mediated phenomenon, probably.

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00:04:28.383 --> 00:04:32.123

So for them, we Ĥ t Ļ Ų d o bebo w litit l ma ∃ eb ƫ gr Ļ sie startitg thee e s

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And the main question for us is always, would this child benefit from having ear tubes placed?

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00:05:20.103 --> 00:05:25.143

So the first scenario is a kid with what we call recurrent acute otitis media.

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So that's the kid who's getting diagnosed with this acute otitis media,

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00:05:29.463 --> 00:05:30.743

getting treated with ear infections.

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00:05:31.637 --> 00:05:36.537

And for us, what we're looking for is a child who in either the last six months

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00:05:36.537 --> 00:05:38.697

has been treated for three ear infections.

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00:05:38.997 --> 00:05:42.137

And our guidelines are pretty specific that it should be three separate ear

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00:05:42.137 --> 00:05:46.717

infections, not one ear infection that perhaps they failed a first line of antibiotics

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00:05:46.717 --> 00:05:48.157

and then they got a second line.

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00:05:48.477 --> 00:05:51.137

That does not count as two. That should be still one ear infection.

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00:05:51.317 --> 00:05:56.257

So it'd be three ear infections in six months or in one year, four ear infections.

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And at least one of them needs to be in the last six months.

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And then the very last part of that guideline is that for us to recommend ear

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00:06:03.357 --> 00:06:08.437

tubes, they actually should have fluid behind their eardrums on the day that we see them in clinic.

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00:06:08.837 --> 00:06:12.677

oral antibiotics, some parents just say they cannot get their kid to take oral antibiotics.

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00:08:02.717 --> 00:08:05.477

So they're getting shots or IV antibiotics every single time.

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00:08:05.917 --> 00:08:08.997

That's a kid I would be a little more inclined to o f er ear tubes to,

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00:08:09.177 --> 00:08:12.597

as well as kids who are at a higher risk for either they've already been diagnosed

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00:08:12.597 --> 00:08:16.477

with a speech delay or they have another medical comorbidity that's going to

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00:08:16.477 --> 00:08:17.817

increase their risk for a speech delay.

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00:08:17.857 --> 00:08:20.237

We're probably going to be a little more aggressive about making sure they're

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00:08:20.237 --> 00:08:24.097

ear bit, but if they do have chronic f uid, lots of infections because they

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00:08:24.097 --> 00:08:27.877

may have a speech delay or are going to have a higher risk, I'm more inclined

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00:08:27.877 --> 00:08:30.397

to do that as the first thing when I see them.

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00:08:31.259 --> 00:08:34.139

And so then that kind of brings us into the second group of kids that we are.

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00:08:34.259 --> 00:08:37.559

So the kids who are maybe have never been diagnosed with an ear infection,

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00:08:37.759 --> 00:08:42.119

but they've had this mucousy fluid sitting behind their eardrums.

00:09:09.039 --> 00:09:12.579

it maybe they are having some ear discomfort from it all those things kind of

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00:09:12.579 --> 00:09:16.439

go into that decision would those children also bene f t from ear tubes yeah

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00:09:16.439 --> 00:09:22.159

something to to say is i get a lot of parents that will be like okay i you know

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00:09:22.159 --> 00:09:24.419

i've been trying to keep water out of their ears i don't let them swim.

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00:09:59.059 --> 00:10:02.919

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00:10:22.879 --> 00:10:25.119

That doesn't mean, I mean, I've seen tubes fall out earlier.

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00:10:25.199 --> 00:10:27.879

We've seen tubes stay in there for forever and don't want to come out.

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00:10:29.072 --> 00:10:32.932

So they're generally self-limited. They fall out on their own.

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00:10:32.972 --> 00:10:36.592

When they do fall out, they can develop a little scarring in the eardrum.

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00:10:36.872 --> 00:10:40.732

Most of the time, it doesn't really cause any issues. Now, when the eardrum

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00:10:40.732 --> 00:10:45.312

does heal back, it does heal back a little thinner. So the eardrum is three layers thick.

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00:10:45.532 --> 00:10:48.592

When it heals back, it's usually no more than two.

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00:10:48.752 --> 00:10:51.832

And so it is a little thinner. That means it can be a little floppier in that

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00:10:51.832 --> 00:10:56.112

area. But not most of the time we find with just one set of ear tubes,

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00:10:56.312 --> 00:11:00.292

it's not causing that big of a deal or causing them any symptoms or issues.

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00:11:00.612 --> 00:11:04.272

I will say, too, that, you know, when parents ask me about the scarring issue,

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00:11:04.492 --> 00:11:10.612

I will also tell them that I have seen kids who have so many just chronic infections,

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00:11:10.712 --> 00:11:12.732

had so many infections or chronic fluid.

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00:11:12.912 --> 00:11:16.272

And the fact that they had that put them at risk of developing scarring because

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00:11:16.272 --> 00:11:19.812

our eardrum is trying to protect itself and will develop kind of a thickness

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00:11:19.812 --> 00:11:24.972

there. or they've spontaneously perfed before, meaning that they had a rupture of the eardrum.

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00:11:2[illegible]11:28.872 h c@ RF ′H 42.772

And so when it healed back, it healed back with some scarring.

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00:11:27.972 --> 00:11:31.992

So the scarring in and of itself isn't necessarily a problem.

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00:11:32.032 --> 00:11:34.672

Now, if you have multiple sets of ear tubes and repeated scarring,

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00:11:34.772 --> 00:11:37.972

that could over time cause some issues with thickened hearing,

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00:11:38.152 --> 00:11:42.772

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00:11:46.232 --> 00:11:51.072

Even two or three, it's not necessarily an issue. And for the parent listeners,

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00:11:51.292 --> 00:11:55.032

the parent guilt that everybody feels, like when you say that,

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00:11:55.072 --> 00:11:58.152

like thinking like, oh, well, --

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00:12:11.659 --> 00:12:15.879

And so the, you know, waiting a couple of days, especially if it doesn't look

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00:12:15.879 --> 00:12:18.779

overtly infected, is totally fair.

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00:12:18.919 --> 00:12:22.899

If it ruptures, it's just unfortunate and it is really sad. But it that doesn't

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00:12:22.899 --> 00:12:25.119

mean that the antibiotics would have changed it necessarily.

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00:12:25.579 --> 00:12:29.999

It's not necessarily causing scarring or damage or or does it?

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00:12:29.999 --> 00:12:33.939

So the perforation, just like any hole on the eardrum, could cause a little

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00:12:33.939 --> 00:12:35.619

scarring on that eardrum.

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I think for the most part, if parents want to keep them at home,

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00:13:14.579 --> 00:13:16.679

you know, try to treat with some Tylenol for a couple of days,

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00:13:16.919 --> 00:13:21.339

you know, maybe 24 to 48 hours, that's going to be safe for most kids.

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00:13:21.439 --> 00:13:24.779

And then if they're still having symptoms, though, I would recommend having their ears checked.

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00:13:24.879 --> 00:13:29.239

But certainly younger kids I would not wait I would just bring them in to have

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00:13:29.239 --> 00:13:33.799

their ears checked because of the risk of the serious infection exactly yeah.

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00:13:35.131 --> 00:13:38.551

Otitis externa. So that's otherwise known as swimmer's ear.

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00:13:39.571 --> 00:13:44.891

That's essentially where you have our ear is our ear canals like a dark tunnel.

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00:13:45.091 --> 00:13:48.791

It's imagined like a cave. And so it's moist and there is heat.

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00:13:49.011 --> 00:13:53.611

And if the environment is just right, you can get an infection very easily.

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00:13:53.771 --> 00:13:57.851

And a lot of times what we see is when it kind of arises from kids who are swimming

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00:13:57.851 --> 00:14:01.391

in the summer a lot or exposed to water, those that are in like swim team,

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00:14:01.511 --> 00:14:03.851

things like that, that they're just constantly water exposed.

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00:14:04.431 --> 00:14:06.691

Again, it doesn't necessarily just have to happen with water.

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00:14:06.771 --> 00:14:09.371

You can just have the right environment, but I think that's the most common

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00:14:09.371 --> 00:14:10.571 --

thing that we tend to see.

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00:14:11.651 --> 00:14:15.691

Oh, I was going to say, we do see also a fair amount of like teenagers and even

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00:14:15.691 --> 00:14:21.151

in adults, you can get what's called like a chronic eczematous otitis externa.

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00:14:34.171 --> 00:14:38.291
So, and then when it gets infected and swollen, it can be very painful.

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00:14:38.551 --> 00:14:42.131
That's where the ear, just touching the ear can be very painful to just even

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00:14:42.131 --> 00:14:45.831
moving it a little bit. A lot of times they may see drainage coming out of the ear.

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00:14:46.211 --> 00:14:49.171
And that's where it can be kind of di f icult if you do have a ruptured eardrum

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00:14:49.171 --> 00:14:53.231
that if it's just draining into the ear canal actually can cause some swelling

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00:14:53.231 --> 00:14:55.631
in the ear canal. And so then you have kind of a little bit of both.

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00:14:56.211 --> 00:14:59.711
But that's where the eardrops are really helpful in keeping the ear nice and

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00:14:59.711 --> 00:15:01.971

dry to help treat those situations.

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00:15:02.631 --> 00:15:06.651

Swimmers ear or a drop that does, drops that do that. Every time you get in the water.

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00:15:07.377 --> 00:15:09.857

I wouldn't do the antibiotic drops every time you get in the water.

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00:15:09.917 --> 00:15:12.497

The dark swimmer's ear prevention drops, the alcohol. Yeah, you can.

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00:15:12.597 --> 00:15:15.877

Yeah, yeah, do that. Some people will mix like equal parts water and vinegar.

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00:15:16.137 --> 00:15:20.257

So people who are more prone, you can just kiwat ore w er's ear ɔ ̃A er's ear ɔ ̃A 'sssssssss

So people 15:15:877 atvget i get do

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00:15:27.417 --> 00:15:30.817

Yeah. Oh, wow. Yeah. And I think they do have some like pre-made formulations

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00:15:30.817 --> 00:15:34.777

that you can buy at like any Walmart pharmacy or anything like that as well.

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00:15:34.777 --> 00:15:38.937

And if you have a known hole in your eardrum, that's where I would say you just want to be careful.

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00:15:39.077 --> 00:15:43.25 ή

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00:15:54.237 --> 00:15:59.417

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00:17:16.616 --> 00:17:21.396

Yeah. So what you can do, what is safe is that you can get like a tissue and

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00:17:21.396 --> 00:17:25.916

sort of twist it into like a spear looking thing because a tissue is soft. It's not hard.

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00:17:26.036 --> 00:17:29.696

It's not going to hurt you. And you can stick that in the ear canal and sort

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00:17:29.696 --> 00:17:31.016

of twist while it's in there.

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00:17:31.016 --> 00:17:36.016

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00:17:43.076 --> 00:17:45.836

You don't know what they're going to do. They can flip in a, in a moment.

00:18:12.556 --> 00:18:17.256

like elementary school age, something like 70 to 80% of them have at least had one ear infection.

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00:18:17.596 --> 00:18:21.056

And that at any given time, I don't remember what the percentage is,

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00:18:21.116 --> 00:18:25.616

but a very large percentage will have middle ear fuid at any given time.

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00:18:26.456 --> 00:18:28.376

This has all been so insightful.

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00:18:29.838 --> 00:18:33.998

And tell me, how did you become known as the she and T? Tell me about your team.

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00:18:35.298 --> 00:18:39.738

I love that. Well, so I feel like that's like a thing in ENT,

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00:18:39.738 --> 00:18:40.978

maybe because of the way it fows.

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00:18:41.218 --> 00:18:43.418

That if there's like, like I remember when I was a resident,

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00:18:43.498 --> 00:18:47.478

if we were on a rotation and it was just the female residents, it was she and T.

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00:18:47.798 --> 00:18:52.798

It's like a thing. And so when we joined, it was Dr.

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00:18:52.898 --> 00:18:55.938

Early and then Dr. Sher joined and I joined shortly after Dr. Sher.

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00:18:56.718 --> 00:19:00.678

And so we're three girls and shanty and actually our nurse practitioner is also

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00:19:00.678 --> 00:19:05.818

a female and so we're very shanty a lot of our staf in our clinic happen to

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00:19:05.818 --> 00:19:07.778

be females and this is not a preference

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00:19:07.778 --> 00:19:10.298

it just happened to be that way so we love it we do have one guy,

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00:19:37.438 --> 00:19:41.638

could not go but over the weekend had a she and t event at her house that she

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00:19:41.638 --> 00:19:46.078

00:20:04.898 --> 00:20:08.058

Mo. So Dr. Mo's been here for ages and ages. A lot of people know him.

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00:20:08.098 --> 00:20:10.938

He's a really nice guy. Yeah, the University Hospital.

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00:20:12.734 --> 00:20:17.414

Brought them over onto our side. And so they're part of our extended group and

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00:20:17.414 --> 00:20:20.774

they're still going to be in their same location out in the Deer f eld area.

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00:20:21.134 --> 00:20:26.314

They were under a di f erent private practice kind of domain before,

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00:20:26.414 --> 00:20:28.874

and now they're with us, but they still have their opening.

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00:20:28.974 --> 00:20:33.374

And so they're open for business and ready to bring anybody in.

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00:20:34.414 --> 00:20:37.234

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00:21:29.234 --> 00:21:31.234

Just don't. Yeah, I don't know. I don't look at her ears.

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00:21:31.394 --> 00:21:36.554

No, but I think in some ways it's been nice because there are things that in

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00:21:36.554 --> 00:21:39.214

my mind, I always like assumed were kind of normal baby things,

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00:21:39.354 --> 00:21:41.074

but I had never really experienced them.

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00:21:41.174 --> 00:21:44.154

And so to actually have the experience of when people talk about,

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00:21:44.194 --> 00:21:45.994

oh, like my kid gets congested at night.

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00:21:46.034 --> 00:21:49.674

I'm like, you know, I don't know. I guess that's a thing. But now like my kid

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00:21:49.674 --> 00:21:53.614

goes to daycare and so she gets very congested at night. That is real.

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00:21:54.054 --> 00:21:58.774

Yeah. Yeah. That's a whole nother topic of conversation. Another podcast. Yeah.

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00:21:59.978 --> 00:22:03.538

You both have dogs? Yes. We all have dogs. All the she and tees.

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00:22:03.558 --> 00:22:06.358

Yes. I have two rescues. One's 13

My cat thinks he's a dog, too. So I think that's probably why he's the frst

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00:22:21.858 --> 00:22:24.298

to go to the dog food when I put it down.

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00:22:24.478 --> 00:22:28.778

So, I mean, he thinks he's one of the gals, actually, because my dogs are girls and he's a boy.

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00:22:29.358 --> 00:22:32.338

And then dr share here has two i

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00:22:32.338 --> 00:22:35.638

have two very energetic german shepherds and

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00:22:35.638 --> 00:22:40.198

then dr early has three labs she has one of every color that was her goal and

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00:22:40.198 --> 00:22:44.878

she got it all she has a black lab a yellow lab and chocolate i have a black

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00:22:44.878 --> 00:22:50.378

lab and he's so sweet he was a rescue as well and a border collie and we're

00:23:45.278 --> 00:23:48.478

Anything else you want to add before we sign of ?

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00:23:49.761 --> 00:23:52.661

Probably one of the other things that we'll get a lot is I'll get kids that

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00:23:52.661 --> 00:23:55.881

have entered daycare or school for the frst time and they'll have a bunch of ear infections.

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00:23:57.101 --> 00:24:00.721

And by the time I see them, most of the time it's like they've had the year

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00:24:00.721 --> 00:24:04.241

and I see them in the summer and I ask them, I'm like, when was the last time you had an infection?

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00:24:04.381 --> 00:24:09.201

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00:24:36.381 --> 00:24:40.201

And I think that's another thing I would just add is that, you know,

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00:24:40.201 --> 00:24:45.481

in those cases, a lot of times for newcomers to school, newcomers to daycare, they can be bad.

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00:24:45.521 --> 00:24:48.561

Now, Now, if they're kind of in the crucial speech development phase,

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00:24:48.721 --> 00:24:50.221

that's maybe a di f erent story.

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00:24:50.381 --> 00:24:54.001

But especially those kids that are like going to pre-K or kindergarten for the

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00:24:54.001 --> 00:24:55.021

f rst time, they're talking.

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00:24:55.441 --> 00:25:00.701

You know, those are the ones I'm like, it could just be a bad year. They had a bad hit.

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00:25:01.081 --> 00:25:05.081

Let's see what happens, especially if they haven't really had one in a few months. So I think.

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00:25:05.875 --> 00:25:08.875

Parents understanding that our immune systems are

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00:25:08.875 --> 00:25:12.075

developing and so we don't know what kind of we don't

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00:25:12.075 --> 00:25:14.935

know what's going to happen in the next year when they start their next year at school so

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00:25:14.935 --> 00:25:17.755

as long as they're not still consistently having issues it could

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00:25:17.755 --> 00:25:20.915

be something we can monitor okay and we'll be covering more ent

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00:25:20.915 --> 00:25:27.155

topics down the road we talked about doing an episode on sore throat also tongue

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00:25:27.155 --> 00:25:31.035

tie am i missing anything big i think we want to talk about hearing loss hearing

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00:25:31.035 --> 00:25:34.915

loss yeah and then we'll put the other guidelines where it's really all in one

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00:25:34.915 --> 00:25:39.075

place It's just our American Academy of Otolaryngology has guidelines for everything.

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00:25:39.375 --> 00:25:43.135

And those look great. It looks very clear. Yes. Yeah. And Eric,

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00:25:43.175 --> 00:25:46.515

I mentioned earlier before we got on this that there's a lot of resources for,

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00:25:47.135 --> 00:25:50.795

patients speci f cally because they can be dense to read.

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00:25:50.935 --> 00:25:56.515

And so the information that they have for patients and their families is very

413

00:25:56.515 --> 00:25:58.515

easy to read and is very helpful.

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00:25:58.815 --> 00:26:01.975

I love how that's being done now. That's so great. so

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00:26:01.975 --> 00:26:05.155

well thank you so much for being here in the podcast studio.

416

00:26:04.240 --> 00:26:12.400

Music.

417

00:26:05.155 --> 00:26:11.915

Thanks for having us hi my name

418

00:26:11.915 --> 00:26:15.975

is Nadine Haeckel I'm a pediatric otolaryngologist through the UT UMA system

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00:26:15.975 --> 00:26:20.735

we worked at the Huebner clinic the pediatric ENT clinic on Huebner we are happy

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00:26:20.735 --> 00:26:25.415

to see if you have any ENT related issues I'm Erica Scher I am a pediatric ENT

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00:26:25.415 --> 00:26:29.735

through UT health at the university University Hospital in San Antonio.

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00:26:29.895 --> 00:26:31.515

I also work at the Huebner Clinic.

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00:26:31.775 --> 00:26:36.315

And again, we're happy to see anyone with ENT issues who is under the age of 18.

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00:26:36.755 --> 00:26:40.135

Our website is pediatricsnowforparents.com.

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00:26:41.195 --> 00:26:44.835

Pediatrics Now for Parents can also be found wherever you get your podcasts.

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00:26:45.355 --> 00:26:47.295

I'm Holly Wayment. I'll see you soon.

427

00:26:47.935 --> 00:26:49.535

Thank you so much for listening.