

Glue Ear (Otitis Media)

Glue ear involves inflammation, either chronic or acute, and an accumulation of fluid in the middle ear. It can cause pain and hearing impairment. If it persists, an ear nose and throat specialist will advise a simple operation to put in grommets to allow fluid to drain from the middle ear.

A large number of primary school children suffer from Glue Ear, especially when colds, flu and other minor infections and childhood diseases are present. The symptoms usually recur on a regular basis, particularly when the child has had a cold or throat infection which has infected the ear. If the problem is considered to be severe then antibiotics will be prescribed, and possibly decongestant nasal drops.

Key Characteristics:

A child who suffers with glue ear may:

- Talk loudly and be unaware of the level of their voice.
- Have poor listening and attention skills.
- Experience difficulties with developing phonological skills.
- Often appear to be withdrawn or in a world of their own.
- Have difficulties interacting with more than one or two people at a time.
- Be unable to participate fully in group activities.
- Need to have the sound on the television or radio at a higher level.
- Need to have instructions repeated clearly and slowly.
- Find it difficult to participate in music or singing lessons.
- Put their hands to their ears or head quite frequently.
- Have frequent ear, nose and throat infections.

Strategies we use in the Classroom

We may need to:

- Speak slowly and clearly, but not necessarily more loudly.
- Allow the child to sit where they can see the teacher's face.
- Make sure that we use the child's name to attract their attention.
- Have a low level of background noise when directly teaching the class.
- Provide opportunities for the child to work with a partner rather than in a group.
- Give short, clear instructions.

Useful Websites:

www.ndcs.org.uk

www.nhs.net/conditions/glue-ear