

## **Alternative Treatments for Ear Infections**

Ear infections are the most common reason for pediatric visits, with an estimated 24.5 million per year, and the most common reason for antibiotic prescription among children. They are also the most common reason for surgery among children. Yet recent reviews conclude that the standard course of antibiotics provides only marginal benefits. One study estimates that *antibiotics are effective for ear infections only one time in seven.*

Most children one year of age have already received at least one course of antibiotics. This is alarming, particularly given the widely publicized concerns regarding overuse of antibiotics and the long term and converse effects on the health of our children vs. the health of the microbes: the more we ingest, the more resistant the bacteria become and the less resistant our systems become.

Many of you have heard the story of my daughter Lily and her series of ear infections as a baby (if you haven't, ask me—it's a good story). It was her amazing and seemingly instantaneous response to a homeopathic remedy that led me into my study of homeopathy. Now, research published in the prestigious Pediatric Infectious Disease Journal suggests homeopathy is effective in providing symptomatic relief in the treatment of acute otitis media (middle ear infection) in children. Of course, some of us already knew that, but it's nice to have it validated with a randomized, double blind, placebo-controlled study in a peer-reviewed medical journal!

In another study, Pediatric Infectious Diseases looked at the effectiveness of homeopathy in treatment of acute ear infections.

Symptoms were decreased significantly at 24 and 64 hours after treatment, and there were fewer treatment failures and recurrences at 5 days, 2 weeks and 6 weeks. The author noted four homeopathic remedies used most often for ear infections were: pulsatilla, chamomilla, sulfur, and calcarea carbonica. While I would agree that you have a good chance of addressing an ear infection with one of these, please remember that for chronic or recurring episodes it is best to consult a professional. And, I encourage everyone to learn the basics of homeopathy so that they can treat small problems themselves at home.

In my experience, both personal and professional, the right homeopathic remedy is incredibly effective not only in relieving the symptoms of an acute ear infection, but in minimizing the chances of recurrence. This is in sharp contrast to the merry-go-round experience of alternating ear infections and antibiotics which so many frustrated parents and frantic children have experienced, where infections recur increasingly whenever a child is not on antibiotics.

Other holistic modalities are also helpful for ear infections including chiropractic, herbs, and acupuncture.

For any child prone to ear infections, please check for food sensitivities; they are almost always the underlying cause. Call me if you would like additional help with this issue. Eliminating chronic ear infections may be easier than you think!

Here are some additional suggestions for dealing with ear infections.

1. **Sing!** Did you know that singing exercises all the muscles of the

head and neck, providing the pump action which empties the Eustachian tubes? That helps keep children free from middle ear infections. Singing also releases endorphins, the body's pleasure hormones. So lead a round, or put on some music and sing out!

2. **Fish Oil:** Annals of Otolaryngology, Rhinology, Laryngology recently reported that over a season, flavored cod liver oil prevented ear infections in children who were prone to them. I recommend Designs for Health's Norwegian Cod Liver Oil, which is a pleasantly flavored lemon liquid that virtually everyone can tolerate, and has been very successful in my practice. Most kids find it quite tasty and actually look forward to their daily dose. You can order it from me or from [www.mossnutrition.com](http://www.mossnutrition.com)

3. **Garlic** You can make your own garlic oil by mashing a clove of garlic and covering with 1/4 cup of olive oil. Let it sit for at least a few hours, then strain. Apply a few warm drops in the effected ear, and cover with a little bit of cotton ball. For an unusually potent garlic supplement to take internally, try Allicillin at [www.mossnutrition.com](http://www.mossnutrition.com)

Fran Sussman  
Sussman Holistic Svcs, Inc.  
845-496-0385  
<http://www.fransussman.com>  
<mailto:fran@fransussman.com>  
Office Hours By Appointment  
Monday-Friday  
Day & Evening Hours Available  
Local Sessions in Office  
Long Distance Sessions by Phone & Webcam  
MasterCard, Visa & Discover Accepted

*Fran Sussman Sussman Holistic Svcs Inc. Strengthening the Body Mind & Spirit Since 1993*  
845-496-0385 [www.fransussman.com](http://www.fransussman.com)