

Earache Taringa Ngau



What causes earache?

He aha te pūtake o te taringa ngau?

- Earache occurs when a cold or infection spreads up the small tube that connects the ear to the back of the nose and throat.
- The tube becomes blocked and the infection spreads into the middle ear.
- The eardrum bulges out and becomes red and painful.

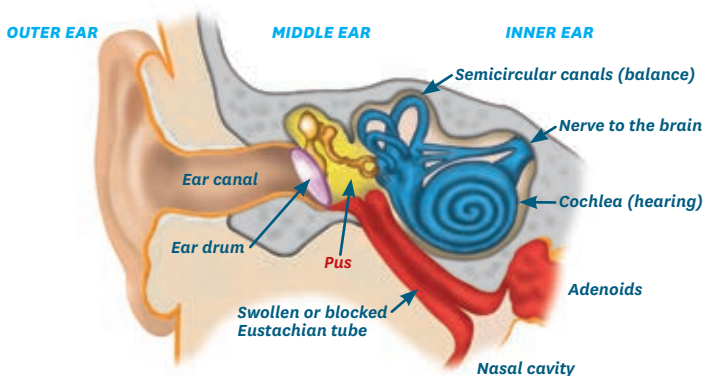
Earache can be serious

I ētahi wa, he mate taumaha te taringa ngau

Earache is painful. Ear infections can cause hearing loss and in rare cases may lead to infection of the bone around the ear.



The Infected Middle Ear



How can I tell if my child has earache?

Me pēhea au e mōhio ai he taringa ngau tō taku tamaiti?

Earache may cause your baby to:

- cry or grizzle more than usual
- keep touching an ear again and again
- have a discharge from the ear, sometimes called a runny ear or a leaking ear.

Some babies may have a cold as well as earache.

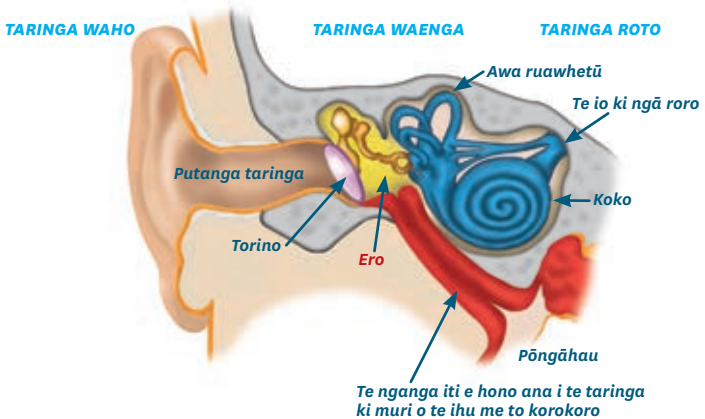
If a hug, a clean nappy or some food does not settle your baby, it may be earache.

An older child may show some of the signs above or complain about a sore ear.

When your baby or child has any of these signs, it may be earache.

Do not use cotton buds to clean baby's ears. Never poke anything into a child's ear. The eardrum can be easily damaged.

Te Taringa Ngau



Take action

Whakatikahia, mahia

You know what your child is usually like.

- If you think your baby has earache, take your baby to the doctor or mobile hearing clinic right away.
- At night or in the weekend, call your duty doctor.

A discharge or 'runny' ear

He rukenga, he taringa kea rānei

- The infected fluid (pus) in the middle ear causes pressure on the sore eardrum, which can be very painful.
- If the child's ear is 'runny' or discharging, the ear infection has caused the eardrum to burst.
- If this happens, the pressure is relieved and the pain is gone, so the child may seem to be much better. However, the infection will still be present.
- The child still needs to see a doctor to have the infection treated and to make sure the eardrum heals properly.

Treatment and giving medicines

Te whāngai i ngā rongoā

Earache is painful. Your doctor or nurse will tell you what medicine is best to ease the pain if your child is distressed.

- If you are giving your child medicine for pain relief, paracetamol is safe and effective. Always follow the directions carefully.

Never give more medicine than the directions tell you to.

Giving antibiotics

Not all earaches need antibiotics. Your doctor will tell you which treatment is best.

- Give an antibiotic exactly as the doctor or pharmacist tells you.
- Ears usually stop hurting before the infection is properly better.
- Keep giving your child the antibiotic until it is finished.
- When all the antibiotic is finished, take your child (or baby) back to the doctor or child health nurse. Only a doctor or nurse can tell if the infection has properly cleared.
- If the doctor has given your child an antibiotic, you should notice some improvement after 2 days. The ear infection should be getting better and the pain should be less. If there is no sign of improvement after 2 days, go back to your doctor. The doctor may want to try a different antibiotic.



Preventing ear infections

Te ārai i ngā mate taringa

- * **Take your child for Well Child checks.**
- * **Breastfeed if you can.**
- * **Keep your home and car smokefree.**
 - stop smoking if you can or smoke outside.
- * **To reduce the risk of asthma and allergies:**
 - keep your house dust-free
 - keep rooms warm and dry
 - keep animals out of bedrooms.
- * **Never bottle feed a baby lying down flat.**

Hold baby nearly upright when bottle feeding.

If the baby is lying flat, ear infections can be caused by the formula flowing into the middle ear through the eustachian tubes.

Further information

Information about glue ear and the insertion of grommets as treatment for glue ear can be found in the Ministry of Health pamphlet *Glue Ear – Taringa Hoi*, code HE1414.



New Zealand Government



This resource is
available from
www.healthed.govt.nz
or the Authorised Provider
at your local DHB.
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