The Homeopathic Treatment of Earaches

Dr. Amy Rothenberg
What is an earache?

- Otitis media is an inflammation of the middle ear
- It can be on one side or both
- #1 reason children visit the doctor
- Adults also can get an earache
Anatomy of an eardrum
Photos from medicine.net
Inside the ear
Fluid build up as in an earache
Ruptured ear drum
Causes of otitis media

• Blockage of the eustachian caused by a cold, allergy, or respiratory infection
• Presence of bacteria or viruses can cause an accumulation of pus and mucus behind the eardrum
• This causes pressure and pain locally
Risk factors for otitis media

• Being in day care
• Smokers in the home
• Allergies can make one more susceptible
• Teething
• Exposure to wind
• Certain genetic & anatomic elements
Common presenting symptoms

- Pulling on the ear
- Fever
- Irritability or changes in temperament
- Not wanting to lie flat
- Changes in appetite & thirst
- Some have NO perceivable symptoms, ear infection picked up on routine physical
What happens next?

• The eardrum does not vibrate correctly leading to acute hearing loss
• The eardrum can burst causing pus to drain from the ear
• If pus and mucus stay in the middle ear can lead to:
  • Serous otitis media which can cause ongoing issues and hearing loss
Allopathic treatment

• Rest
• Hydrate
• Pain relievers and fever medications
• Antibiotics
• Decongestants or antihistamines if build up of mucous due to allergies
• In chronic cases, ear tubes
WASP: wait & see prescription

- Some pediatricians have adopted this approach for simple, uncomplicated and infrequent otitis media
- Send home with prescription with direction to NOT fill unless child is no better or worse in two days
- Trying to reduce exposure to antibiotics to reduce antibiotic resistance
Possible complications

• Perforated ear drum
• Hearing loss
• Mastoiditis
• Meningitis
Homeopathic treatment of otitis media

- How to take the case
- Description of the top 12 remedies used in practice
- How to administer
- What potency/How often to repeat
- What if it does not work
- Other natural medicine approaches
How to “take the case”

• Best remedy is one that fits the whole patient
• If verbal & able, get all the information about the type and intensity of the pain
• Equally as important is a quick review of systems
• Physical general symptoms
• Temperamental shifts
• Observation of patient
Many need a dose of their constitutional remedy

• If that’s the case, the acute remedies will not work, will not work as well or infection will soon return
• For constitutional care, best to work with a qualified practitioner
• Fine to try the acute remedies; cannot hurt
• If you find you are giving one of these acute remedies over and again, you will get better results with constitutional care
# Top 12 remedies for earache in my practice

- Belladonna
- Aconite
- Pulsatilla
- Chamomile
- Mercury
- Hepar sulphuris
- Ferrum phos
- Sulphur
- Phosphorus
- Lycopodium
- Calcarea carbonica
- Silica
Belladonna (Bell)

• Sudden onset
• Redness of ear
• Fever
• Throbbing pain
• Hot head, cold extremities
• Glassy eyes
• Sensitive to light
Aconite (Acon)

- Sudden onset
- Often after exposure to wind
- With attendant fear and anxiety
- Often worse at or around midnight
Pulsatilla nigricans (Puls)

- Pains come and go
- Often with mild yellow or green discharge from nose
- Thirstless
- Desires and is better with comfort & affection
- Patient feels warm & wants cool air
Chamomilla (Cham)

- Extreme pain
- Inconsolable
- Irritable
- Often with teething
- Often with loose stools
Mercury (Merc)

- Excessive salivation and perspiration
- Bad smells from nose and mouth
- Discharges from nose or ear
- Cannot regulate body temperature, cold then hot
- Often with loose stools
- Often with swollen glands
Hepar sulphuricum (Hep sulph)

- More developed infection
- Pus and pressure have built up
- Often with a sore throat or cold with thick yellow that has a thicker yellow or green discharge
  - Sharp pain
  - Irritability
- Chilly, better with warmth
Ferrum phosphoricum (Ferr phos)

- Pain or itching in or around the ear
- Early stages of an earache
- Fever
- Redness of face
- Easy to confuse with Belladonna
Sulphur (Sulph)

• Often in a patient who needs this remedy constitutionally
• Redness around all orifices
• Feels warm
• Thirsty for cold drinks
• May have loose stools
Phosphorus (Phos)

• Often in a patient who needs this remedy constitutionally
• May have blood tinged discharges
• Needs attention and support
• Thirsty for cold
• Glassy eyed, sweet
Lycopodium clavataum (Lyc)

- Often in a patient who needs this remedy constitutionally
- Often right sided
- Irritable
- Sore throat with earache, better warm drinks
- Often with gas and bloating
- Worse in the late afternoon
Calcarea carbonica (Calc)

- Often in a patient who needs this remedy constitutionally
- Often with teething
- Constipation accompanies infection
- Cold and sweaty
Silicea (Sil)

- Often in a patient who needs this remedy constitutionally
- Chilly and sweaty, thinner child, not especially robust
- Constipated
- Listless
How to administer

• Dry dose
• Liquid dose
What potency/how often

- Remedy more important than potency
- 30c fine to start with
- Wait one hour, if no better go to 2nd choice remedy
- If better, then worse again, repeat remedy
- No need to keep giving if patient is improving OR better
What if it does not work?

• Go to 2\textsuperscript{nd} choice remedy
• Go to 3\textsuperscript{rd} choice remedy
• Most common mistake: giving an acute remedy when patient needs their constitutional remedy
• Seek professional help
What to expect from a remedy

• In the fast acting remedies, resolution in minutes
• In slower acting remedies, the response may be slower
• The remedies assist the body’s ability to heal itself
• Most acute earaches will resolve completely, the remedies & other natural medicine approaches support the body’s efforts
Other natural medicine approaches

- Nutritional approaches
  - Diet
  - Supplements
  - Gut flora
- Botanical medicine
  - Decongestant
  - Immune support
- Hydrotherapy
  - Derivative treatments
  - Local treatments
- Manual approaches
  - Cranial work
  - Lymphatic massage
Post ear infection

• Remember patient just went through an infection
• Good time to keep sugar low, stay hydrated, do not miss sleep, lay low for a few days
• We are more vulnerable at that time
• Lighter schedule/more down time!
Other kinds of earaches

• External otitis
• Chronic serous otitis
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Value of the occasional infection

• Gives immune system some experience
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The A Cappella Singer Who Lost Her Voice
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other stories from
NATURAL MEDICINE

Amy Rothenberg, ND
For further information

• Clinical practice: www.nhcmed.com

• Writing:
  • www.amyrothenberg.com
  • http://www.huffingtonpost.com/amy-rothenberg-nd/

• New England School of Homeopathy & the Herscu Letter: www.nesh.com
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• New England School of Homeopathy &
  the Herscu Letter: www.nesh.com