

Priority Topic: EARACHE

Key Features:

For a single article on this topic: [Otalgia AAFP 2018](#)

but you should also study AOM: [Otitis Media Diagnosis and Treatment AAFP 2013](#)

1. Make the diagnosis of otitis media (OM) only after [good visualization of the eardrum](#) (i.e., wax must be removed), and when [sufficient changes are present in the eardrum](#), such as bulging or distorted light reflex (i.e., not all red eardrums indicate OM).

Clinical Tip: spend some time looking at Google Images of AOM!

What you should study:

- ✓ [AOM in children AAFP 2017](#)
- ✓ [Otitis Media Diagnosis and Treatment AAFP 2013](#)
- ✓ [AOM Summary CPS Position Statement 2016](#)

2. Include pain [referred from other sources](#) in the differential diagnosis of an earache (eg. Tooth abscess, trigeminal neuralgia, TMJ dysfunction, pharyngitis, etc.).
3. Consider [serious causes](#) in the differential diagnosis of an earache (eg. tumors, temporal arteritis, mastoiditis).

Differential Diagnosis

What you should study:

- ✓ [Otalgia AAFP 2018](#)

4. In the [treatment of otitis media](#), explore the possibility of [not giving antibiotics](#), thereby limiting their use (e.g., through proper patient selection and patient education because most otitis media is of viral origin), and by [ensuring good follow-up](#) (e.g., reassessment in 48 hours).

What you should study:

- ✓ [Otitis Media Diagnosis and Treatment AAFP 2013](#)

5. Make [rational drug choices](#) when selecting antibiotic therapy for the treatment of otitis media. (Use first-line agents unless given a specific indication not to.)

What you should study:

- ✓ [Traitement d'otite chez les enfants INESSS 2016](#) (English version online)

6. In patients with earache (especially those [with otitis media](#)), recommend [appropriate pain control](#) (oral analgesics).

What you should study:

- ✓ [AOM Summary CPS Position Statement 2016](#) (**just says to use tylenol/advil**)

7. In a child with a [fever and a red eardrum](#), look for [other possible causes of the fever](#) (i.e., do not assume that the red ear is causing the fever).*

What you should study:

- ✓ [Otitis Media Diagnosis and Treatment AAFP 2013](#)

8. Test children with [recurrent](#) ear infections for [hearing loss](#).

What you should study:

- ✓ [Surdité chez l'enfant MduQ](#)

Note: *See the key features on fever.

Other issues that come up in clinic:

- ✓ [La trompe d'Eustache MduQ 2017](#)
- ✓ [Cerumen Impaction AAFP 2017](#)