



Bayside Medical Group, Inc.

www.baysidemed.com

EAR INFECTIONS (SNAP)

## SNAP—A New Treatment Option for Ear Infections

**M**any parents are all too familiar with ear infections (technically, otitis media), and the pain and fever they can bring. For years we have routinely treated ear infections with antibiotics with good success. Now, however, we have a new treatment option available to us. It is called SNAP—Safety Net Antibiotic Prescriptions.

While giving antibiotics for every ear infection has worked well, the SNAP program will let us use antibiotics much less. This will be a good thing for two reasons. First, sometimes antibiotics cause side effects, such as stomach upset, diarrhea, diaper rash, and allergic reactions.

Second, if we use antibiotics too often, after a while the germs become resistant to them. So it's better to save them for when they are really needed.

To use antibiotics less, we need to identify which ear infections are not dangerous, and will likely get better on their own, just as fast as if they were treated with antibiotics. This is something that only we, your clinicians, can do. We look at the ears carefully, and examine the patient. The patients who may be able to go without antibiotics are usually over two years old, but sometimes between six months and two years. The patient also cannot be severely

ill—pain and fever are acceptable, but not more severe symptoms.

For these selected cases that are likely to improve on their own, here is what we do:

- We make sure that pain and fever are controlled. This means that we recommend acetaminophen or ibuprofen. (Tylenol, Motrin, or Advil.) A warm towel to the ear can help, and occasionally ear drops.
- We give you a prescription for antibiotics to hold, and not to use right away.
- **Day 1** – If your child's ear pain or fever gets worse, please call us. We will probably recommend that you use the prescription and start the antibiotics.
- **Day 2** – If the pain and fever are still present, please call us. We will probably recommend that you use the prescription and start the antibiotics.
- **Day 3-5** – If the pain and fever come back after getting better, please call and make an appointment. We will need to recheck and probably start the antibiotics.

In any case, please don't hesitate to call us for any problems. If this watching and waiting approach makes you nervous just let us know, and start the antibiotics we prescribe. And please remember, once you start taking antibiotics, it's very important to make sure they are taken to the very end.

