Barotitis Media
Inflammation of the Middle Ear

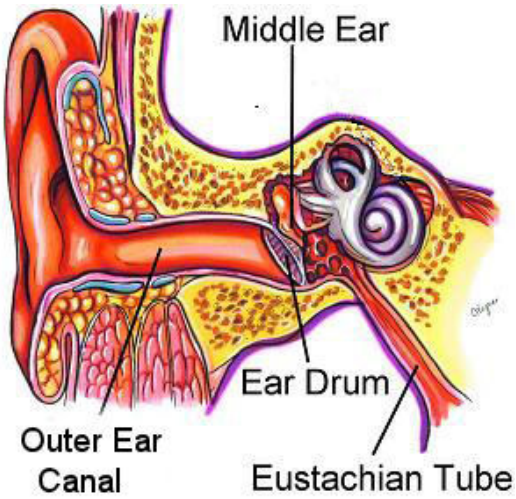
Barotitis media is soreness *(inflammation*) of the area behind the eardrum (middle ear). This occurs when the auditory tube (*Eustachian tube*) leading from the back of the throat to the eardrum is blocked. When it is blocked air cannot move in and out of the middle ear to equalize pressure changes. These pressure changes come from changes in altitude when:

- Flying.
- Driving in the mountains.
- Diving.

Problems are more likely to occur with pressure changes during times when you are congested as from:

- Hay fever.
- Upper respiratory infection.
- A cold.

Damage or hearing loss (*barotrauma*) caused by this may be permanent.



HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- Use medicines as recommended by your caregiver. Over the counter medicines will help unblock the canal and can help during times of air travel.
- Do not put anything into your ears to clean or unplug them. Eardrops will not be helpful.
- Do not swim, dive, or fly until your caregiver says it is all right to do so. If these activities are necessary, chewing gum with frequent swallowing may help. It is also helpful to hold your nose and gently blow to pop your ears for equalizing pressure changes. This forces air into the Eustachian tube.
- For little ones with problems, give your baby a bottle of water or juice during periods when pressure changes would be anticipated such as during take offs and landings associated with air travel.
- Only take over-the-counter or prescription medicines for pain, discomfort, or fever as directed by your caregiver.
- A decongestant may be helpful in de-congesting the middle ear and make pressure equalization easier. This can be even more effective if the drops (spray) are delivered with the head lying over the edge of a bed with the head tilted toward the ear on the affected side.
- If your caregiver has given you a follow-up appointment, it is very important to keep that appointment. Not keeping the appointment could result in a chronic or permanent injury, pain, hearing loss and disability. If there is any problem keeping the appointment, you must call back to this facility for assistance.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You develop a severe headache, dizziness, severe ear pain, or bloody or pus-like drainage from your ears.
- An oral temperature above 102° F (38.9° C) develops, or as your caregiver suggests.
- Your symptoms do not improve or become worse.

MAKE SURE YOU:

- Understand these instructions.
- Will watch your condition.
- Will get help right away if you are not doing well or get worse.

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