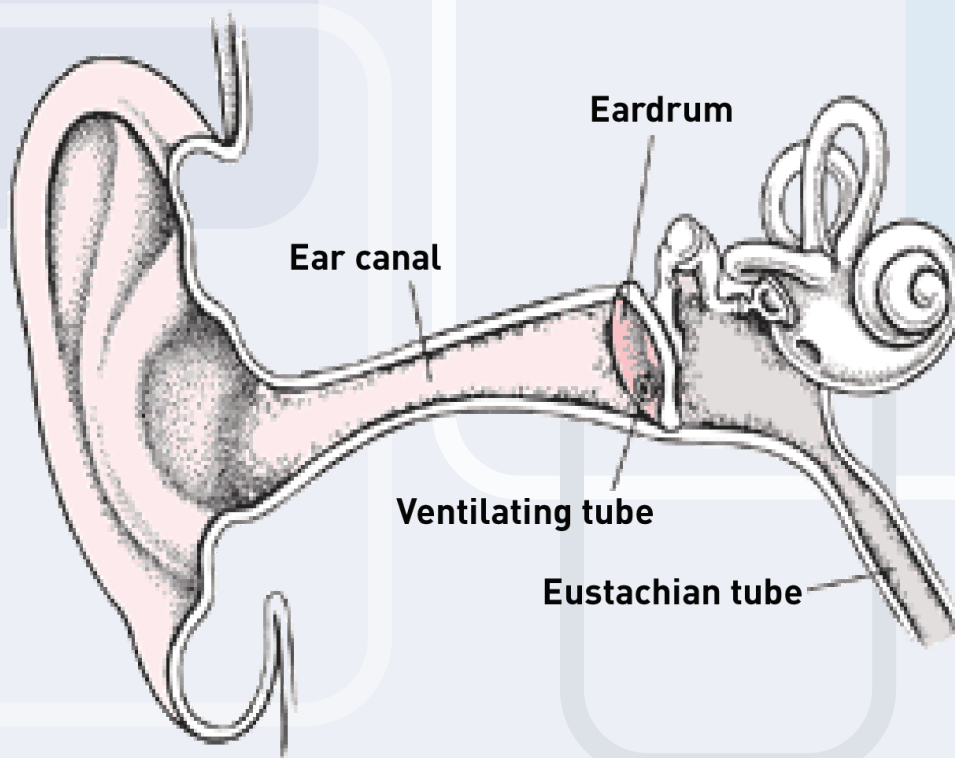


Glue ear – what is it?

Glue ear is a condition where fluid has collected behind the eardrum, and this reduces the ability to hear clearly, because the eardrum and the small bones in the middle ear cannot move freely. The sound becomes muffled, as though you have your fingers in your ears or are swimming underwater. It is very common in childhood, and can keep coming back. It may get better on its own. If it does not get better, help is needed.

Fluid in the middle ear may be associated with colds, or painful ears, but can occur without any symptoms except a hearing loss. You and your child may not know they cannot hear, and they may appear dreamy, inattentive, or unresponsive. They may also be late in developing their speech and language.

Once the condition has been diagnosed and he/she has had a hearing test, then the doctor may first treat your child with medicines. If the problem continues, an ENT (Ear, Nose and Throat) surgeon can operate to take the fluid away and put a very small tube (grommet) through the eardrum, to let air into the middle ear so it can heal. Sometimes the surgeon may wish to remove the adenoids as well, and very occasionally the tonsils. Once inserted, grommets will naturally fall out by themselves, after six months or so.



NHS

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How to help your child with glue ear

- Always get your child's attention before talking to them – for example, by touching them and calling their name, until they look at you.
- Try to get face-to-face when you are talking to them, so they can hear you more easily.
- Reduce background noise when you talk – for example, turn down the TV/radio.
- Speak in short, simple sentences, using gestures and appropriate facial expression to help convey your meaning.
- Always let your child's teachers or other carers know about their hearing difficulties. Ask your child's teacher to seat them at the front of the class so they can easily see the teacher's face.
- Be patient. Your child may become frustrated at not being able to hear and understand. Repeat what you say, if necessary.

