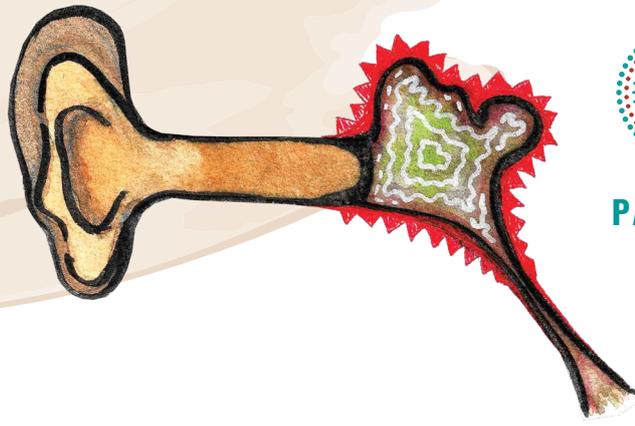


Glue Ear



What is Glue Ear?

Glue Ear happens when the middle part of your ear fills up with a thick, sticky fluid that doesn't go away. The longer the fluid stays, the thicker it gets, which is why we call it "Glue Ear."

What causes Glue Ear?

Inside your ear, there's a small tube called the Eustachian tube. This tube connects the space behind your eardrum to the back of your nose and throat.

Usually, fluid drains out through this tube. But if you have a cold, the flu, or an ear infection, this tube can swell and get blocked, trapping fluid inside your ear.

How did I get a Glue Ear?

Glue Ear can happen after a cold, flu, or ear infection, especially if there's nowhere for the fluid to go. It's more common in kids under 8 because their tubes are smaller and easier to block. Some people have a higher chance of getting Glue Ear, like those who:

- Keep getting colds and flus.
- Were born with a cleft palate.
- Have Down syndrome.
- Live with people who smoke.
- Are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

How do I feel / How do I look with a Glue Ear?

Sometimes it's hard to tell just by looking at someone. That's why it's important to yarn with your doctor or healthcare worker if you or your child seems unwell or acts differently.

Signs of glue ear can include:

- Trouble hearing: They might ask people to repeat themselves or turn up the TV too loud.
- Balance problems: They might fall over more than usual or feel dizzy.
- Sleep issues: Glue Ear can make it hard to sleep.
- Ear pain: Little kids may pull on their ears because they can't explain what's hurting.
 - Sometimes however, there is no pain, which can make glue ear hard to find.
- Mood changes and behaviour troubles: They might get frustrated or irritable because of the discomfort or because they can't hear properly.
- Ear infections that keep coming back.
- Discharge from the ear meaning the ear drum has perforated.
- Delayed speech development: some kids will be late to start talking.
- Difficulty at school: learning problems because of trouble hearing the teacher.

How does the doctor know I have glue Ear?

If you have noticed any of these things above, visit your GP or healthcare clinic. Your doctor will ask you about your symptoms and look inside your ears using a tool called an otoscope, which helps them see the eardrum.

If your doctor thinks more tests are needed, they might:

- Send you to an Ear, Nose, and Throat (ENT) specialist.
- Recommend a hearing test with a hearing specialist (audiologist). Your healthcare clinic can help you find one.

How can we fix Glue Ears?

Sometimes your doctor may give you antibiotics to help clear up the fluid. If the fluid doesn't go away or it's affecting hearing, your doctor might suggest grommets (tiny tubes) to help drain the fluid from the ear.

If your child has a speech delay, the GP will suggest they see a Speech Pathologist.

For children with hearing problems, it's important for families to keep talking and writing, telling stories, and staying connected.

