

## A guide about glue ear

**Are you concerned about hearing levels of your child or a child you work with? Does your child experience glue ear? If so, this leaflet provides information and advice you may find helpful.**

Glue ear is a common condition which affects young children between the ages of two and five. At times fluid builds up in the middle ear and cannot drain away. This can then impact on your child's hearing.

In most cases glue ear clears up on its own but up to five per cent of children have persistent glue ear for which they may require treatment.

### Common symptoms

Your child may have some or all of the following symptoms:

- frequent ear infections
- clumsiness
- they may not always respond when spoken to, especially if they are not looking at you
- they may often say 'pardon?' or 'what?'
- they may need the volume up high on the television
- it may take them longer to walk, talk and understand language.

### Treatment

If your child appears to have any of these symptoms, please discuss the situation with your GP in the first instance. They may prescribe antibiotics, decongestants or antihistamines.

Some children may need to be seen by an audiologist, who will carry out a hearing test. Your speech and language therapist or health visitor can refer your child for a hearing test.

Some children may need a referral to an ear, nose and throat (ENT) consultant for further investigation.

The ENT consultant may recommend that your child would benefit from having grommets inserted. These allow the fluid to drain from the ear. It is, however, also common for a 'wait and see' approach to be adopted, as children often grow out of this condition.

### How to help

- Avoid smoking near your child.
- Reduce background noise when talking to your child; for example, turn down the television.
- Make sure you have their attention before you start talking to them.
- Get down to their level.
- Speak clearly. Do not shout.
- Let family and teachers know about the problem.



## Further information

The following websites have further information for parents and staff:

- [www.literacytrust.org.uk/talktoyourbaby](http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/talktoyourbaby)
- [www.talkingpoint.org.uk](http://www.talkingpoint.org.uk)

## Contact us

Please contact the Children's Therapies Department if you have any queries or concerns regarding the information in this leaflet.

**Visit:** [www.kentcht.nhs.uk/thepod](http://www.kentcht.nhs.uk/thepod)

**East** | Green Banks, Westfield Road, Margate CT9 5PA  
0300 123 8112 or 0300 042 0871

**West** | Heathside Centre, Invicta House, Heath Road, Coxheath, Maidstone ME17 4AH  
01622 742326

**North** | Children's Resource Centre, Darent Valley Hospital, Darent Wood Road, Dartford DA2 8DA  
01322 428242

## Do you have feedback about our health services?

**Phone:** 0300 123 1807  
8am to 5pm, Monday to Friday  
**Text:** 07899 903499  
**Email:** [kentchft.PALS@nhs.net](mailto:kentchft.PALS@nhs.net)  
**Web:** [www.kentcht.nhs.uk/PALS](http://www.kentcht.nhs.uk/PALS)

**Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)**  
Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust  
Unit J, Concept Court  
Shearway Business Park  
Folkestone  
Kent CT19 4RG

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