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 two and five years. 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, in the first instance discuss the situation with your GP. He 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.

It may be decided by the ENT Consultant 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
• www.talkingpoint.org.uk
Contact the Children’s Therapies Service
Please contact your Integrated Therapy Team if you have any queries or concerns regarding the information in this leaflet.

Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley
Phone 01322 428242

Tonbridge, Tunbridge Wells and Sevenoaks
Phone 01892 501860

Maidstone and Malling
Phone 01622 742333

Canterbury
Phone 01227 783042

Thanet
Phone 0300 042 0871

If you need communication support, an interpreter or this information in another language, audio, Braille, Easy Read or large print, please ask a member of staff.

You will be asked for your agreement to treatment and, if necessary, your permission to share your personal information.

Leaflet code: 00171a
Published: July 2016
Expires: July 2019

Customer Care Team
If you have a query about our health services, or would like to comment, compliment or complain about Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust, you can contact the Customer Care Team.

Phone: 0300 123 1807, 8am to 5pm, Monday to Friday
Please say if you would like the team to call you back
Text: 07899 903499  Email: kcht.cct@nhs.net

Address: Customer Care Team, Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust, Unit J, Concept Court, Shearway Business Park, Folkestone, Kent CT19 4RJ  Web: www.kentcht.nhs.uk

If you need communication support, an interpreter or this information in another language, audio, Braille, Easy Read or large print, please ask a member of staff.

You will be asked for your agreement to treatment and, if necessary, your permission to share your personal information.

Leaflet code: 00171a
Published: July 2016
Expires: July 2019
Page 2 of 2