



GIG  
CYMRU  
NHS  
WALES

Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol  
Caerdydd a'r Fro  
Cardiff and Vale  
University Health Board

Patient Information Leaflet

# Conductive Hearing Loss (Glue Ear)

Children's Audiology

Noah's Ark Children's Hospital for Wales, Heath Park, Cardiff, CF14 4XW

[www.cardiffandvaleuhb.wales.nhs.uk/children-s-audiology-services](http://www.cardiffandvaleuhb.wales.nhs.uk/children-s-audiology-services)

# Introduction

## About this leaflet

Your child has been found to have Glue Ear. This leaflet gives you some information about the condition.

## What is glue ear?

Glue ear is a very common condition, affecting mainly children, where thick sticky mucus builds up behind the eardrum. In some children it causes hearing problems. They may also develop, as a result, problems with speech, behaviour and education.

In a lot of cases glue ear will clear up by itself, and will not require any treatment. However, if it has persisted for more than 3 months, then most doctors would feel that it requires treatment of some sort.



## What causes glue ear?

The reason children tend to get glue ear is because the tube that normally drains the mucus away (the Eustachian tube) does not work very well. We do not know, however, why this is so, or why children in particular are so prone to the problem.

## Why may an operation help?

There is no treatment available that will make the Eustachian tube work properly, but in children with glue ear, having a grommet inserted may help. A grommet is a small tube which is inserted into the ear-drum, usually under general anaesthetic, which allows the mucus to be removed, and the hearing will then usually improve.

## Non-Surgical help

### Otovent® (Autoinflation)

For children aged 4 and over, who are found to have glue ear, and are able to blow their nose, use of an Otovent® balloon is suggested.

There is some evidence that this device, which is a small balloon that your child blows up with their nose, may improve the chances of the glue ear settling down by itself, and therefore avoid the need for any treatment.

It is very safe and easy to use, although some younger children may find it difficult.

Although we are not able to prescribe this, it is widely available online (just type "Otovent" into your search engine) and in pharmacies for £5-£10. [www.otovent.co.uk](http://www.otovent.co.uk)



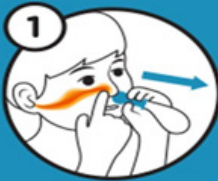
### The Otovent® Method

Otovent is a small nasal balloon which the patient blows up using their nose. Otovent equalises the pressure and relieves the symptoms of glue ear in the middle ear.

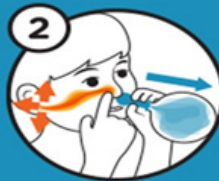
The act of blowing up the balloon helps to open up the Eustachian tube, making it easier for fluid to drain from the middle ear.

Children can use Otovent at home under parental supervision. It is painless, harmless and takes only a matter of seconds to perform. Otovent should be used 2-3 times daily for a period of 2- 3 weeks. Patients will often start to see results as early as a few days into using the Otovent.

## HOW TO USE OTOVENT®



**1** Connect the balloon to the nose piece. Hold the round part of the nose piece firmly against the right nostril with the right hand. Press the left nostril closed with the left hand.



**2** Inhale deeply, close the mouth and inflate the balloon until it is the size of a grapefruit by blowing through the nostril.



**3** Repeat the procedure with the left nostril. You will know that the treatment works if the child experiences a pressure increase and/or a "click" in the ear.

### Frequency of Use

Otovent is best used three times a day (morning, midday or after school, and evening) or at least twice a day (morning and evening) if that is not possible.

The normal duration of treatment is 2-3 weeks, after which your doctor should decide whether or not you continue with the treatment.



# Otovent

*Now with travel  
case for on the go  
convenience!*



## **Watchful waiting**

If glue ear is not treated by surgery, then there is a good chance it will get better by itself in time, but how long this will take cannot be predicted; it may take some time.

Some children will cope very well with a mild hearing loss, but most children with a persistent hearing loss may fall behind socially and at school without treatment.

Some parents may feel that their child is coping well with their hearing loss and do not want them to have any treatment.

## **Treatments**

If at the next appointment your child still has glue ear, and this is affecting their hearing, then possible treatments will be discussed with you. This may include surgical (grommets) and non-surgical treatment (hearing aid).



Tel: 02920 743011/3179

Mobile Tel: 07805 670259

Email: [Audiology.helpline@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:Audiology.helpline@wales.nhs.uk)