

Advice from Doctor:

Cold & Influenza

mimi No.37

Dr. Masaki Nakanishi,

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[Difference between the common cold and influenza]

Main symptoms of the common cold are a sore throat, sneezing, nasal secretion, and nasal congestion. Systemic symptoms do not appear very much. In the case of influenza, however, strong systemic symptoms such as a fever exceeding 39°C, headache, joint pain, and muscle pain appear as well as a sore throat, nasal secretion, etc. In addition, influenza may be complicated by otitis media or febrile convulsion in the case of infants, and also bronchitis, pneumonia, or encephalitis, which may cause death in the worst case.

[Treatment for influenza]

Early treatment is very important for preventing infection to other persons as well as protecting your own body. Recently, medicine that inhibits the growth of influenza viruses in the body has been developed, which is effective in reducing the period of illness or relieving the symptoms. However, it is important for effective treatment to take the medicine as soon as possible after the symptoms have appeared. Because influenza viruses grow rapidly in the body, taking the medicine at the earlier stage can restrict the amount of viruses in the body. Therefore, see a doctor as soon as possible. Although commercially available cold medicine can relieve the symptoms such as a fever, nasal secretion, and nasal congestion, it does not have direct effect on influenza viruses or bacteria.

[Prevention of influenza]

When air is dry, you easily become infected with influenza. Wear a flu mask when you go out, and keep an adequate humidity in the room using a humidifier, etc. A daily balanced diet is also important. In addition, when you have come home, you are recommended to gargle and wash your hands, which can also prevent a cold. Influenza vaccine can relieve symptoms such as a high fever and reduce hospitalization or death due to complications. Persons who are 65 years old or more and patients of underlying disease (respiratory diseases such as bronchial asthma, circulatory diseases such as chronic cardiac failure and congenital heart disease, diabetes, kidney failure, immune deficiency disease, etc.) are especially recommended to receive the vaccine, because symptoms of influenza easily become worse in the case of such persons.

[Reasons for delayed diagnosis]

- (1) You assumed that you had the common cold and continued taking commercial cold medicine.
- (2) You were busy with work and overlooked the early symptoms.
- (3) You only took antifebrile even if you had a shivering fit.
- (4) Although you were in bed all night, the symptoms became worse.

Don't you have experienced the above? See a doctor as soon as possible without making a judgment by yourself



If your child develops a fever

mimi No.39

**Dr. Toshihiro Nakajima,
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Children often develop a fever suddenly and their parents feel uneasy about it, but in fact a fever is not such a fearful symptom. The brain will not be harmed by a high temperature unless it rises above 42°C, so keep calm when coping with a fever.

The normal temperature for a child is by nature higher than an adult's and more variable, so unless the temperature rises above 38°C, wait and see how things go. If the temperature rises above 38°C, there may be some illness involved, so it is necessary to let the child rest quietly. It is not necessary for the child to be very thickly clothed, but when the temperature rise is abrupt, the body may shiver with cold or the limbs may become cold; in such cases increase the number of clothes or blankets a little. However, once the temperature rise has passed its peak and the child complains of the heat, reduce the number of clothes or blankets.

Feverish children often sweat heavily and lose their appetite. In such cases it is important to give more water than usual. However, give the water a little at a time and frequently, since drinking a lot of water at one time may cause vomiting.

You must take children to hospital if they are debilitated due to severe vomiting or diarrhea, if they have difficulty in breathing, if their consciousness seems to be clouded, or if they have a convulsive fit. In contrast to this, if a child seems to be full of energy even when suffering from a high fever, it is all right wait and see for between twelve and twenty-four hours before taking the child to hospital. However, it would be better to take an infant of less than six months to hospital earlier than this, as it can be difficult to diagnose illnesses in very young children.

Most attacks of fever in children are due to viral infections, the so-called common cold. Since the immunity of the body is at a maximum when the temperature is between 38-40°C, fever is useful for killing viruses. Therefore, to speed recovery, it would be better to cool the child at the armpit or the base of the foot, to give the child water and to let the child rest rather than to administer an antifebrile. As a matter of course, an antifebrile may be administered if the child seems to be in pain, but some of these are not suitable for children, so please consult a doctor about which antifebrile to use and for directions on its use.

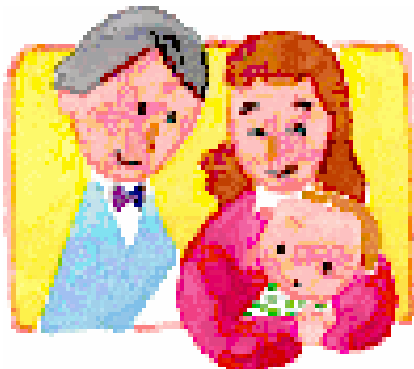
Dr. Akio Kihara

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As for children's allergy, most people may call up atopic dermatitis or bronchial asthma. Even about these diseases, each patient has different symptoms and progress. For example, atopic dermatitis is a disease that easily occurs to children who have delicate and dry skin; however, infection to the skin or an allergy to food sometimes makes the condition of the disease worse. Regarding bronchial asthma, each patient has different symptoms such as wheezing while having a cold, a bad condition during a bad weather and less tolerance to ticks or dust. In these ways, factors that make allergic diseases worse vary according to patients. In addition, each patient has his/her own life style. Therefore, doctors in pediatrics departments must consider cures that give the least burden and the largest effect to each patient, and make efforts so that the patient can continue to receive treatment reasonably.

Studies of immunology have progressed lately and cures of atopic dermatitis or bronchial asthma have also progressed very much. For example, a steroid inhalation therapy is relatively safe and it is rapidly becoming popular these days as a therapy that may be able to cure children's bronchial asthma at the early stage. Also, Leukotriene blockers, medicine for internal use, are being widely noticed, because they can be used easily and have a good effect. These two medicines will play a central role in the cure of children's bronchial asthma for several years from now. Regarding atopic dermatitis, a therapy suitable for each patient was difficult to understand for children and their families, because food restriction was a major part of treatment and explanation about steroid ointment was insufficient. Currently, however, such confusion is being resolved, and the following are becoming established as basic cures of atopic dermatitis: (1) Skin care, (2) proper use of ointment including steroid, and (3) food restriction for children who need it.

Because allergic diseases cannot be cured in a short period, children and their families tend to think impatiently that we want to be cured anyway as soon as possible. However, the cures have almost become established lately. Such diseases will be surely cured if the patients receive treatment patiently according to the plan. The most important thing might be that patients should receive cures positively.



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Ears are one of the most important organs for animals (humans also being animal). Ears are tools for communication by hearing sound or voice, and for protection by detecting danger. The function of ears is critical for humans in our daily lives and for protection.

There are several factors that cause pain in the ears. A scratch or an infection can cause a severe pain; a change in air pressure can also cause pain. Sometimes the cause is not directly in the ears. The most common case is when the pain in the throat or jaw joint reaches the ears and causes pain.

To begin with, let's talk about infection. When the inside of an ear is infected, different names are given depending on the location of infection. Infection in the ear hole is called "External ear infection". When the infection reaches the auris media, which is located behind the eardrum, it is called "Middle ear infection". The common cause for External ear infection is a small scratch created from an action such as cleaning ears. The scratch may be very small at first, but it can cause you an itch and you may touch it again. In the mean time, germs could enter from your ears and make it swell or fester.

Acute middle ear infection often occurs when you have a cold. Germs in your nose travel up to the auris media through the auditory tube, which adjusts air pressure to clear up the sound, and creates an infection. Middle ear infection is common among children because their auditory tubes are fatter and shorter. Therefore, germs can travel from nose to ears very easily. Adults, however, can still receive acute middle ear infection from, for example, blowing their nose hard.

Another common cause for pain is a change in air pressure. If the air pressure changes suddenly, the auditory tube cannot adjust the pressure fast enough. The resulting pain is caused from the eardrum being pushed in. As you probably experienced, you feel this pain when the airplane is taking off or landing, or when the elevator is moving. To relieve this pain, hold your nose and exhale into your closed mouth.

Lastly, if the pain is not directly in the ear, this means there is no infection or scratch in your ear. Often times, an infection in the throat causes the pain in the ear.

The symptoms mentioned above are all treatable by an ear/nose/throat specialist. If you feel something is not right, please visit a specialist as soon as you can.

Names / Phrase related to Ears

Ear (*Mimi*)

Eardrum (<I '>Komaku)

Ear wax (*Mimi-aka*)

Inner ear infection (*Naijien*)

Middle ear infection (*chujien*)

External ear infection (*Gaijien*)

Ringing (*Miminari*)

Eye drops (*Tenjiyaku*)

Ear/Nose/Throat Specialist (*Jibi-inkoka*)

Hearing aid (*Hochoki*)

Foreign object in the ear

(*Mimi ni ibutsu ga haitta*)

Eardrum is ruptured (*Komaku ga yabureta*)