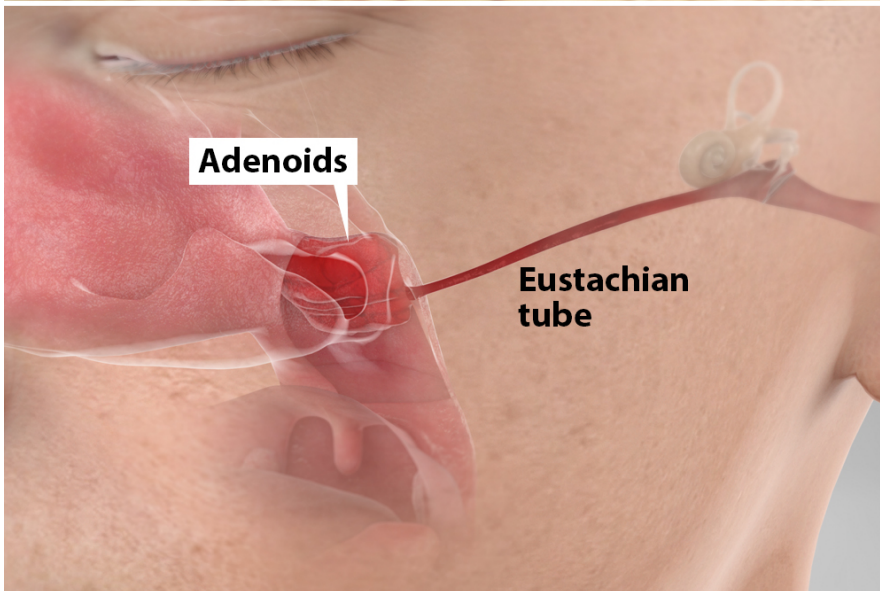
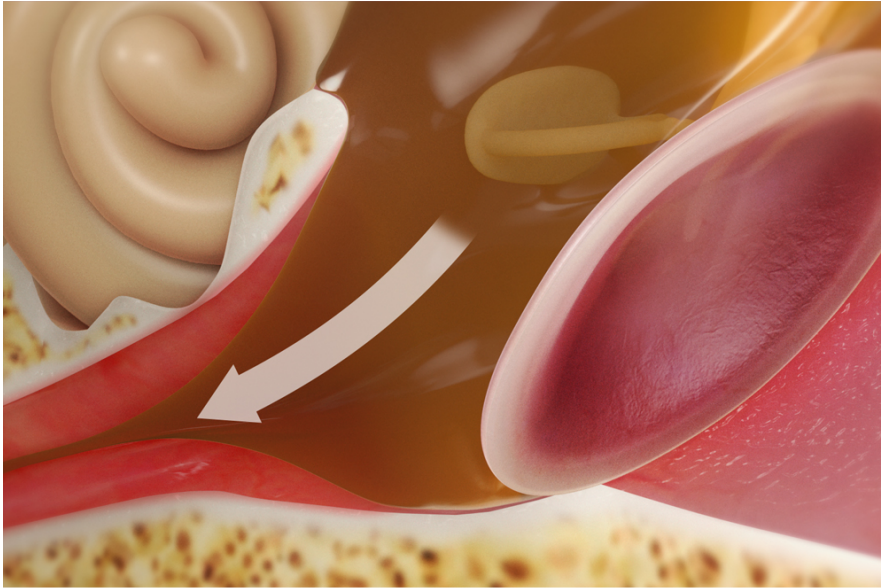




Inflammation of the Middle Ear



Overview

This is an irritation of your middle ear. That's the part of your ear just behind your eardrum. In a healthy ear, fluid drains out of the middle ear through a passage called the "Eustachian tube." But when the middle ear is inflamed, fluid can't drain well.

Causes

What causes inflammation? In many cases it's linked to an ear infection. That happens when germs get in the middle ear. It can also be linked to allergies. It may be linked to smoking, or being around tobacco smoke. And, fluid in the middle ear may be from swollen adenoids. These are glands at the back of the nasal cavity. Swollen adenoids can block a Eustachian tube and keep it from draining.

Symptoms

What are the symptoms? You may have ear pain and fluid drainage from the ear. You may have trouble hearing. It can cause fever, headache, loss of appetite and problems with balance. A young child may tug at their ear. They may cry and have trouble sleeping.

Treatment

How do we treat it? It depends on the cause. Sometimes, inflammation clears up on its own. We can manage pain with medications. We can also put a tiny tube through a small hole in the eardrum to keep it open. This drains fluid from the ear canal. And, in some cases, your doctor may recommend antibiotics. Your doctor will create a plan that's right for you.