

# P.E.A.R.L.S. Practical Evidence About Real Life Situations



## Autoinflation for otitis media with effusion helpful in the short term

Clinical Question	Is autoinflation effective for hearing loss in adults and children with otitis media with effusion?
Bottom Line	Evidence for the use of autoinflation in the short term (up to 3 months) is favourable. Given the low cost and absence of adverse effects it is reasonable to consider autoinflation whilst awaiting natural resolution of otitis media with effusion.
Caveat	All of the studies were small, of limited treatment duration (3 weeks to 3 months) and short follow-up. The long-term effects of this treatment cannot be determined.
Context	Otitis media with effusion (“glue ear”) is the most common cause of acquired hearing loss in children, and can lead to problems of language, development and behaviour. Although there are a number of treatment options (steroids, antibiotics, decongestants, antihistamines and grommet insertion), the best treatment strategy remains controversial as the condition often resolves spontaneously within a few months. Autoinflation is a technique whereby the Eustachian tube is reopened by raising pressure in the nose, encouraging drainage of the fluid.
Cochrane Systematic Review	Perera R et al. Autoinflation for hearing loss associated with otitis media with effusion. Cochrane Reviews, 2006, Issue 4 . Art No. : CD006285. DOI :1002/1465 1858. CD005608. This review contains 6 studies with 558 participants.
PEARLS No. 22, November 2007, written by Brian R McAvoy	

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