

When Children Have Earaches

Inflammation of the middle ear is the most frequent diagnosis recorded for children who visit doctors, and it is the most common cause of hearing loss in children.



FHCN FILE PHOTO

In its ongoing commitment to helping the community with its medical care, Lawnwood Regional Medical Center & Heart Institute is ever expanding the pediatric services it offers. In response to this philosophy, many fine pediatric physicians have chosen to establish privileges with them, and among those doctors is pediatric otolaryngologist Jacob W. Zeiders, III, MD, of South Coast Ear, Nose, & Throat.

“We understand that children are not just small adults,” observes Dr. Zeiders. “A child’s physiology is different from an adult’s. Because they are growing, they metabolize medications and respond to treatments differently. It really requires someone who treats children consistently to be able to address the special needs they have.”

Treating otitis media

Otitis media is inflammation of the middle

ear, educates Dr. Zeiders: “Children are more inclined to get middle ear inflammation and infection than are adults because of their anatomy. Children are still growing and part of their anatomy – in this case, specifically, their Eustachian tube, which links the pharynx to the middle ear – is not yet in an adult configuration. For that reason, they are less apt to be able to clear their ears, and consequently, retain negative pressure in the middle ear, which can then lead to a buildup of fluid. This fluid can pre-dispose them to hearing loss and infection.”

Middle ear inflammation and infection can be very painful. It can cause children to have earaches and high fevers, and, if left untreated, it can lead to perforation of the eardrum, notes Dr. Zeiders: “In severe cases, it can even lead to meningitis, although that is not as common as it used to be because the first line of treatment a child receives for otitis media is typically antibiotics.

“When treated with antibiotics, the infection should clear up and hearing should return to normal. However, occasionally, because of Eustachian tube dysfunction, fluid may remain, pre-disposing the child to recurrent infections and repeating hearing loss, which could lead to speech problems. This is all very disruptive and uncomfortable for the child.”

Fortunately, says Dr. Zeiders, at this point pediatric otolaryngologists can perform an evaluation and make recommendations to the family, which may include ear tubes: “The ear tube mimics what the Eustachian tube normally does. As children grow, their own Eustachian tubes begin to function properly, and the ear tubes typically fall out on their own.”

Dr. Zeiders assures parents that infants and toddlers can be diagnosed for

otitis media: “We have full-service audiology and determine our diagnostic testing based on the child’s age.” **FHCN—Kris Kline**

Lawnwood Regional Medical Center & Heart Institute

Lawnwood Regional Medical Center & Heart Institute is located in the heart of the Treasure Coast. Their specialized care includes a nationally recognized cardiac center, emergency excellence, a 34-bed inpatient rehabilitation center, women’s services serving women at all stages of life, children’s services providing the county’s only Level II neonatal intensive care unit, radiology and diagnostic imaging services, outpatient psychiatric and mental health services, and the Treasure Coast’s first Level II Trauma Center.

Through his work in pediatric otolaryngology, Dr. Zeiders feels he can contribute to the expanding pediatric services at Lawnwood Regional Medical Center & Heart Institute.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF LAWNWOOD REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER & HEART INSTITUTE

Dr. Zeiders says he thoroughly enjoys working with children.

For individualized care

Lawnwood Regional Medical Center & Heart Institute staff look forward to meeting the readers of *Florida Health Care News*. To learn more, please call **(772) 461-4000**. The medical center is located at **1700 South 23rd Street** in Ft. Pierce.

For more information, please visit www.lawnwoodmed.com or call **(800) 382-3522**



Jacob W. Zeiders, III, MD, is board certified by the American Board of Otolaryngology. He earned his undergraduate degree from Johns Hopkins University, an MS in Physiology from the University of Maryland at Baltimore, and his medical degree from Royal College of Surgeons Ireland in Dublin. Dr. Zeiders served his internship at the University of Florida, Tampa, where he also was Chief Resident in the Department of Otolaryngology. He went on to complete a fellowship in pediatric otolaryngology at All Children’s Hospital.