

# Ear Exam Guideline

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## Assessment

- Do an ear exam if child C/O pain, changes in hearing, poor balance or dizziness, drainage.
- Has the student had a recent URI, recently swimming, stuck anything in the ear?
- Do they have a fever?
- External exam
  - Color, drainage, pain, bruising, warmth, surrounding lymph nodes.
- Internal exam
  - Prepare patient: sitting, head tilted slightly away from you.
  - Prepare equipment: otoscope, check light source, use a cover.
  - Exam:
    - Pull ear up and back to straighten ear canal.
    - Visualize ear canal and then insert otoscope at appropriate angle.
    - Point slightly downward and towards nose.
    - Visualize the ear canal and the ear drum using otoscope.
  - Normal findings
    - Canal: small amount of wax, hair, will vary in color size and shape.
    - Ear Drum: should be pearly white-grey and translucent.
  - Abnormal findings:
    - Canal: red, swollen, bleeding, sores, foreign object, large amount of ear wax, drainage.
    - Ear drum: redness, bulging, fluid or bubbles, perforation, scarring (noted at white patches on ear drum).

## **Recommendations**

- **Afebrile with a normal ear exam: offer warm or cold pack for comfort, return to class.**
- **Abnormal ear exam such as redness, bulging, drainage without fever: warm or cold pack for comfort, pain medication if ordered and available, call parent and recommend student be seen by a provider after school release.**
- **Abnormal ear exam with fever, send home with referral to medical provider.**
- **Foreign object, medical referral. Do not attempt to remove foreign object.**