

# Ear Pierced (Healed) - Minor Infection

## Definition

- Minor pierced ear infection
- More than 6 weeks since ear was pierced. Initial healing went well.
- New symptoms are localized redness, swelling and crusting just at earring site
- Spreading redness is more serious and needs to be seen

## Health Information

### Causes of Pierced Ear Infections

- Not cleaning the earrings and posts daily as directed
- Frequent touchings of the earrings with dirty hands
- Clasps that are closed too tightly. Reason: Pressure from tight earrings reduces blood flow to the earlobe.
- Not taking the earrings out at night
- Anything that causes a scratch in the channel. Examples are a heavy earring or a rough area on the post. Reason: Any break in the skin can become infected.
- Inserting the post at the wrong angle also can scratch the channel. Use a mirror until insertion becomes second nature.
- Posts that have nickel in them can also cause an itchy, allergic reaction

## Care Advice

### 1. Overview:

- Minor pierced ear infections can be treated at home.
- With proper care, most will clear up in 1 to 2 weeks.
- Here is some care advice that should help.

### 2. Clean Earring with Rubbing Alcohol:

- Wash hands with soap and water.
- Remove the earring from the ear.
- Clean the earring and post with rubbing alcohol.
- Do this 3 times per day.

### 3. Clean Earlobe with Rubbing Alcohol:

- Then wash away any crusting from the earlobe with soap and water.
- Use rubbing alcohol and some gauze to gently clean the holes on both sides of the earlobe.
- If the alcohol stings, use pierced ear solution instead.

### 4. Antibiotic Ointment:

- After cleaning, apply an antibiotic ointment to the earring post and the earlobe holes.
- Examples are Polysporin or Bacitracin. No prescription is needed. You can also use one you already have.
- Then reinsert the earring.
- Continue until drainage and redness are gone for 2 days.

5. **What to Expect:**

- With proper care, most mild earlobe infections will clear up in 1 to 2 weeks.
- It is common to have mild infections come back without daily earring care.

6. **Prevent Repeated Infections in Healed Pierced Ears (over 6 weeks ago):**

- Remind your child not to touch the earrings except when inserting or removing them. Reason: Fingers are often dirty and can infect the area.
- At bedtime, remove the earrings. Reason: So the channel is exposed to the air during the night.
- Clean earrings, posts, and earlobes with rubbing alcohol. Do this before putting earrings in.
- Apply the clasps loosely to prevent any pressure on the earlobes. Reason: Allows the channel to have a good blood supply.
- Polish or discard any posts with rough spots.
- Avoid heavy earrings.

## Call Your Doctor If

- Ear not improved after 3 days
- Fever occurs
- Spreading redness occurs
- You think your child needs to be seen
- Your child becomes worse

### Pediatric Care Advice

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