

# Discovering the Cause Behind the Symptoms

## *Common Health Concerns for Children May Be Induced by Pediatric Acid Reflux*

**F**or many young children, ear infections, a chronic sore throat, frequent throat clearing and hoarseness are constants. But surprisingly, these symptoms frequently have nothing to do with the real culprit according to Denton Combs, a nurse practitioner and founder of Denton Combs Center for Excellence in Care.

Denton shares, “Most parents assume that because their child has an ear infection, the problem must have started in the ear because that seems to make sense. However, many times, acid reflux can actually cause the infection, so treating the ear issue without addressing the real problem of acid reflux won’t fix the problem.”

According to a study of 500 pediatric patients performed by researchers at the Alfred I. duPont Hospital for Children, 1 out of 5 participants with ear infections had pepsin, a digestive enzyme from the stomach, present in the middle ear indicating severe acid reflux. Acid reflux occurs when acid from the stomach flows upward into the esophagus irritating the throat and many times flowing into the Eustachian tubes, which lead to the middle ear causing a middle ear infection.



The conditions acid reflux frequently causes often mask the true problem, which is why it is such a difficult condition to diagnose. According to Denton, “Unfortunately, this problem is frequently misdiagnosed because people generally seek treatment for the wrong condition. With especially young children, the diagnosis is even more difficult since they can’t tell you exactly what the problem is.”

Denton has treated thousands of patients in the Sioux Falls area during the past 14 years. Specializing in allergy, and chronic ear, nose and throat problems, he acknowledges that many pediatric patients can benefit from acid reflux treatment, even to the point of avoiding surgery. “If I believe a patient can improve through treatment without having to undergo surgery, that is always my first goal. If we can determine what the cause of acid reflux is, we can potentially eliminate the issue or manage it.”

The Denton Combs Center for Excellence in Care is south of 57<sup>th</sup> Street and Western Avenue at 5124 S. Westerns Ave. Suite 4. For further information or to schedule an appointment, call 605-274-3898. Referrals typically aren't necessary but it's always best to check with your insurance provider before making an appointment.

**Denton suggests limiting or eliminating the following foods from your child's diet to reduce their risk or to treat acid reflux:**

- Caffeine, carbonation, ibuprofen, Aleve, aspirin
- Acidic foods: oranges, grapefruit, cranberries, pineapple, tomatoes, lemons, limes, and anything made from those
- High fat foods: anything deep-fat fried, fatty cuts of meat, ice cream, whole milk, butter, some cheeses and nuts
- Pepper group foods: black pepper, chili powder, taco seasoning, Southwest, southtex and Cajun foods, hot peppers, salsa, wings and Tabasco sauce



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