

FACES OF AMR PROFILE STORIES



Ethan

Ethan is a happy five-year-old whose battle with a chronic ear infection started when he was just six months old. Even with his first ear infection, Ethan had to try a couple antibiotics before the ear infection cleared. After that, Ethan had several ear infections that led his doctor to recommend eustachian tube surgery shortly after his first birthday. All went well, but as Ethan grew, he needed a second surgery to implant new tubes.

The night after his second ear surgery, Ethan's parents had to rush him, limp and feverish, to the emergency room. That started a three-year ordeal of treatments involving more than 20 different antibiotics – drops and topicals, oral antibiotics, and even shots. Ethan's mom remembers him pulling on his ear and crying while bloody, thick mucus came from his ear. Throughout the struggle to find a successful antibiotic, Ethan suffered with diarrhea, stomach upset, and diaper and other rashes.

Ethan's ear never completely healed over months and months. Ultimately, he needed another surgery. This time, his mom took him to a new doctor, who prescribed antibiotics, but also cultured the infection and found methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus or MRSA. Ethan's mom recalls the doctor calling her and saying, "Stop taking those antibiotics immediately. He has MRSA and they won't work." Ethan then started a series of appointments to irrigate and drain fluid from his ear followed by additional antibiotic applications. At the age of three, Ethan underwent a third surgical procedure to allow his ear to drain.

Ethan was almost four years old when he was finally free of infection and now feels so much better and is a happy, healthy, growing boy. Ethan receives speech therapy and assistance with learning to read and regaining ground lost during his illness.

Ethan's parents feel frustrated that their family had to go through so much for so long because of an infection from a simple operation. They wish they had known to ask more questions and demand answers, including making sure to know what type of infection Ethan had, especially after the first series of antibiotics didn't work.

By sharing their story, Ethan's parents hope to help other families understand the risks posed by antibiotic resistance and avoid similar challenges and fears.

