



Murray Bridge Veterinary Clinic ABN 34 007 931 875

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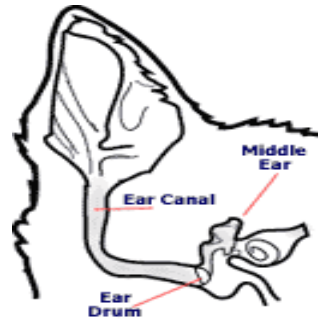
## EARS

Ear infections are a very common problem in dogs and cats. Any dog can get ear infections but several breeds are more likely to develop a problem. These include dogs with long ears such as cocker spaniels or dogs with hairy ears like Miniature Poodles and Schnauzers. In cats the Persian breed seems to be more prone to such infections.

### Anatomy of the ear

The dogs ear consist of three parts; the outer ear, the middle ear and the inner ear. All of these parts can become infected but the most common infection is in the outer ear. The outer ear is made up of the ear flap and a long narrow canal that makes a nearly 90 degrees bend as it travels to the deeper parts of the ear. At the end of the canal is the eardrum.

### The Dogs Ear.



### Causes of ear infections

The inside of your dogs ear is a perfect place for yeast and bacteria to multiply and cause an ear infections because it is warm, dark and moist.

In the ear there is normally a small amount of bacteria, yeast and wax. Ear infections occur when there is a disruption to the normal environment in the ear.

There are a few factors that do this. These include; excess moisture in the ears due to swimming or bathing, excess wax production, a foreign body such as a grass seed, parasites (mite, fleas) and skin allergies. These things can cause ear infections because they irritate the ear. When the inside of ears become irritated they produce too much wax. The moisture of the wax promotes bacterial and yeast overgrowth, which causes an infection.

### Signs of an ear infection

- Shake their head,
- Scratch at their ears
- Rub their head on the ground.
- There may be a discharge from their ear
- Smelly ears.
- Head tilt
- Be unbalanced
- Unusual eye movements.

### Treatment

There are many different ways to treat ear infections and it will depend on what has caused the infection, what type of infection and if the ear drum is damaged or not. Usually a combination of antibiotics, anti-inflammatories and anti-yeast agents are used to fight the infection. If the ear infection is bad the ears need to be cleaned and to do this your pet will probably have to have a general anaesthetic. Ear infections are not always easily fixed and can be a long and difficult process.

### Maintenance.



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To help decrease the possibility of your dog getting an ear infection there are a few things you can do at home.

- Dry their ears after swimming and put cotton wool in their ears when bathing them.
- Control fleas, mites and their skin condition if they have one.
- Regularly use ear cleaners to help maintain a healthy ear (ask your vets about the different types available)