



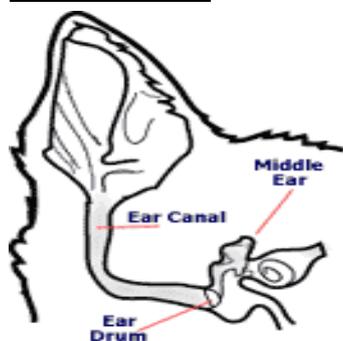
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EARS

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.

The dogs ear



Anatomy of the dogs ear

The dog's ear consists 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.

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: 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 vet about the different types available)

How to apply ear drops to your dog's ears

Lift your dog's ear flap and hold it at right angles to the dog's head to open up the ear canal – you may need an assistant to hold the dog if they do not stay still

Gently insert the nozzle of the bottle of ear drops down into your dog's ear canal as far as it will go without forcing it to make sure the drops reach the bottom of the ear canal. Don't worry – no nozzle is long enough to come close to damaging your dog's ear drum.

Squeeze the bottle to administer the medication, it is hard to tell how much you are putting in so usually just a moderate squeeze is fine. If you are worried you are putting in too little or too much ask for a syringe to help you measure the amount.

Massage the drops into the ear for about 30 seconds, many dogs like this as their ears are itchy. You should hear the drops squishing around in the ear.

Clean the nozzle and repeat the process in the other ear if required.

How to apply ear cleaners to your dog's ears

Go somewhere it doesn't matter if ear cleaner gets shaken everywhere out of your dog's ears (outside, laundry etc) and wear clothes that you don't mind getting ear cleaner and debris on!

Lift up your dog's ear flap and hold it at right angles to the dog's head as for applying ear drops

Gently insert the nozzle of the bottle into your dog's ear canal and fill the ear with the ear cleaner until the solution starts to spill out. A 3-5ml syringe may be helpful. Try and have the ear cleaner slightly warmed if possible before using it.

Place a cotton ball in the entrance of the ear canal (not too deep).

Massage the cartilaginous part of the canal between the opening of the ear canal and where it joins the skull. You should hear a squishing sound – if not either there is not enough liquid or the massaging technique is incorrect. This step is essential to distribute the ear cleaner through the ear canal.

Continue to massage for 1-2 minutes, replace the cotton ball if it becomes soaked.

Once this has been completed allow the dog to shake out as much ear cleaner as possible and wipe the excess ear cleaner from the ear flap and external ear canal.