

EAR PROBLEMS IN DOGS AND CATS

Ear problems are a common, yet very treatable ailment. Learn what to look for and how to prevent and treat common ear infections. Warning signs your favorite four-legged friend might have an ear infection :

- Scratching at ears
- Foul odor inside ears
- Tilting and shaking head a lot
- Debris or redness in ears
- Excessive wax in ears

All breeds and mixed breeds can have ear infections, but some are especially prone to this irritating ailment.

Predispositions to Ear Infections:

- Breeds with long, floppy ears (i.e. poodles, retrievers, spaniels) (Their ears lack proper ventilation and are a better host for infections)
- Hair in the ear canal (It also closes off air flow/ventilation)
- Dogs that go swimming regularly
- Dogs and cats with allergies
- Tumors, polyps, foreign bodies
- Hypothyroidism

Cleaning to Prevent Ear Infections

How often you clean your pet's ears out depends on how many predisposing factors they have. Learn what your pet's ears look like normally so you will notice if there is a problem. A general rule for good preventative care is once a week to once a month, but if infection is present (which a vet should determine) then much more care is needed. **If you suspect that your pet has an ear infection, take them to your vet as soon as possible.** Prolonging treatment will mean continued discomfort for your pet, and the condition often gets worse without treatment. Antibiotics may be recommended to get the problem under control and give relief to possible pain.

How to Clean your Pet's Ears

Start slowly and always be gentle and loving. Use an ear cleaning solution that is made for pets and GENTLY (to avoid injury) squirt the solution into the canal filling the entire canal - and gently massage the ear base for 60 seconds. Let your pet shake its head and then use a cotton ball to wipe out any debris. Repeat until cotton ball is clean. NEVER USE Q-TIPS and never use peroxide, soap, water or oil.