

EAR INFECTIONS IN DOGS: CAUSES AND PREVENTION



Facts About Caring for Your Dog's Ears

- Yeast infections are the most common form of ear infection, though bacterial infections can also occur. If your dog seems painful, has yellow-white discharge from its ears, or is not responding to simple cleaning, you should schedule a consultation with your veterinarian.
- Dogs with floppy ears and dogs which go swimming are the most prone to developing ear infections. These dogs should have their ears cleaned on a regular basis.
- For preventative care of your dog's ears, an acid-based cleaner should be used. Proper technique is essential for successful ear cleaning.

Ear infections can be among the most frustrating and most common problems in dogs. The purpose of this handout is to discuss the causes of ear infections in dogs, why certain dogs are more susceptible to infections, and how to prevent them.

Why Does my Dog Get Infections?

The dog's ear canal is shaped like an "L" (see picture at right) and is much deeper than one would think. Yeast love to grow in dark, moist environments, and a dog's ear is ideal for this.

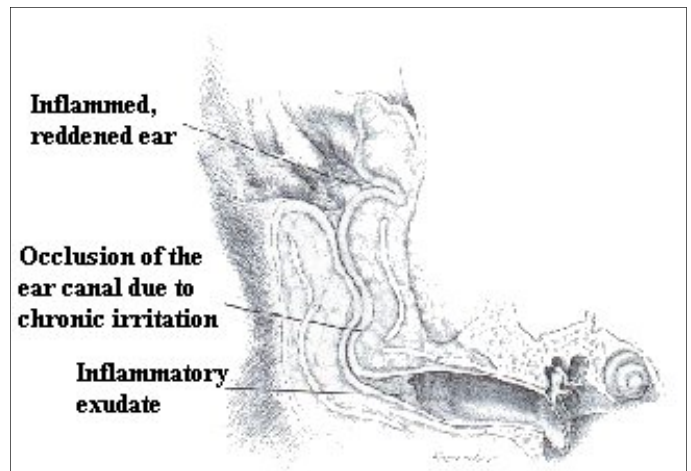
Yeast infections, if not treated promptly, will make the ear more susceptible to bacterial infections. Bacterial infections can be painful and cause permanent structural damage to the ear. Management of bacterial infections is more complicated due to the discomfort they cause.

Floppy-eared dogs are more likely to have ear problems because their ears do not allow for good air flow and

make the canal even darker. Dogs which go swimming often will also be more prone to infections because they will get water in their ears, creating the moist environment in which yeast will thrive. Thus, spaniels and other hunting breeds are among the most frequent breeds we see for ear problems.

which swim need them cleaned even more frequently, possibly two to three times a week during the months when the dog is in the water frequently.

The best way to keep your dog's ears healthy is to clean them regularly with an acid-based ear cleaner. The cleaners are the most



How Do I Prevent Ear Infections?

We recommend that any floppy-eared dog have its ears cleaned once per week for maintenance. Dogs

stringent available and create a dry, inhospitable environment in which yeast does not grow well. Here at Two Harbors we sell **Vet Solutions™** ear cleaner, but any acid-based cleaner will usually do the job.

HOW DO I CLEAN MY DOG'S EARS?



Proper cleaning technique is also a must. Because of the shape of the canal, using a cotton swab will usually only pack debris in tighter. You may use cotton to clean the part of the ear you can see, but you should not push anything into the canal.

Instead, fill the canal with the cleaner until it is overflowing. This ensures that the entire length of the canal comes in contact with the cleaner. Then massage the base of the ear so you can hear the fluid squishing around inside it. This helps

break up the debris. Finally, allow your dog to shake its head, which throws both excess cleaner and debris from the canal. Utilizing this technique will significantly reduce the risk of developing ear infections.