

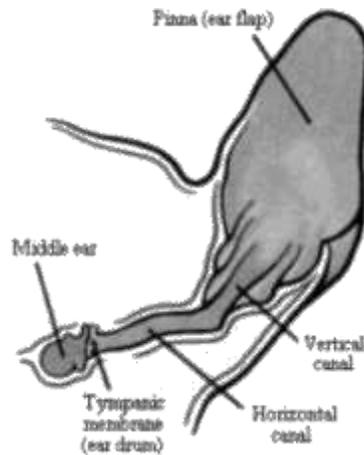
Ear Infections (Otitis Externa)



Meet Jasper, he has an ear infection.

What you will see: Symptoms of the disorder will be visually apparent; your dog will begin to shake its head, and then scratch at its ears as the infection becomes uncomfortable for him/ her.

When examining the ears, the tissues around the outside ear will appear swollen and red. A smelly discharge that may be yellow or black in color could be evident.



In the illustrations you can see that the dog's ear canal has a vertical and a horizontal component. This conformation predisposes dogs to ear infections as debris must work its way upward rather than straight out. **Bacteria and Yeast are normal inhabitants of the ear canal, but under certain circumstances they will proliferate resulting in a full blown ear infection. In some cases allergies, grass awns, tumors, or ear mites can be the underlying cause that initiates an infection.**

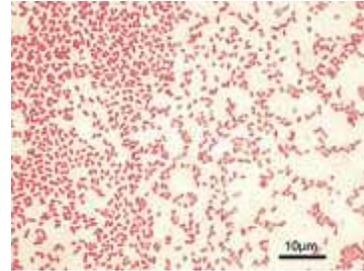
Diagnostic Steps: 1) Otoscopic examination of the ear canal including the ear drum. 2) Ear Cytology = Taking a swab of the ear debris, making a smear on a microscope slide, using a special stain, and examining the slide on the microscope. 3) Culture and sensitivity of ear debris to see specifically which bacteria grows and what antibiotic will work on it.



Special Stain ("diff-quick")



Microscope



Bacteria visible on microscope

How to Treat: 1. Thorough cleansing of the ear canal. (Fill canal, massage thoroughly, wipe clean.)
2. Application of medication into the ear canal.
3. Correction of the underlying cause if possible.
4. Have scheduled rechecks until the ear is cleared.



Examples of Ear Cleaning - it's OK to overfill the canal, then massage the base of the ear thoroughly to break up debris that is deep in the canal, and wipe clean - cotton balls work well and are gentle.

This is an example showing how to apply the ear medication. We often say to apply 5-6 drops of medication, but realistically you can't actually see how many drops are applied. Do your best to apply a "reasonable" amount and massage it in.



Difficult cases: Some cases are very difficult due to resistant bacteria, conformational abnormalities, underlying allergies, or the dog is simply adverse to having its ears handled. Depending on the circumstances, we may need to do a thorough ear cleaning under anesthesia. We have a long-acting ointment that can be deposited in the ear that we sometimes use. Oral antibiotics, antifungals, and corticosteroids can be helpful as well. Food trials and allergy testing are sometimes required to resolve predisposing/ underlying allergy issues.

Soon your pets will be back to their old adventurous or relaxing ways (as the case may be).

