

# EAR INFECTIONS

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## Clinical Signs

The clinical signs of otitis depend on the severity of the inflammation but may include: shaking the head, rubbing the head and ears on the floor or furniture, scratching at the ears, discharge from the ears, redness of the ear canal and earflap (the ears may also feel warm when touched), ear hematoma (swollen earflap), and/or aversion to the ear being touched. Predisposing Factors

## Predisposing Factors

Allergies can predispose a pet to ear infections due to the increased inflammation and irritation. Conformation is also a very common predisposing cause. Dogs with floppy ears, like Cocker spaniels, basset hounds, and poodles are more likely to have issues with otitis. Swimming can also predispose dogs to ear infections. Moist environments are perfect locations for bacterial and yeast infections.



## Otitis Externa

Otitis externa is an inflammatory condition of the outer ear that may or may not be associated with an infection. Many cases of otitis are very simple to treat and resolve in a few days, however there are occasional stubborn cases that become chronic and difficult to manage.



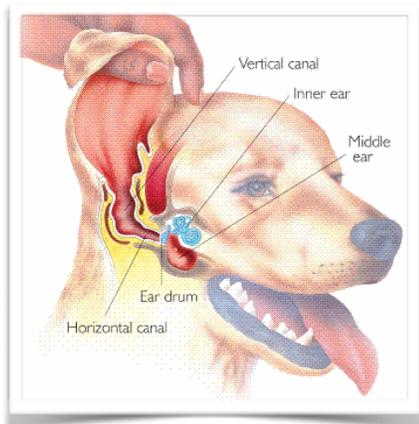


## Anatomy

Because of the twisty, curvy design of a dog's inner ears, it's easy for parasites, bacteria and yeast to hide and thrive in them. This also means that any debris in the canal must work its way up to escape. Infections can result from trapped debris and/or moisture.

## Infection Types

- Yeast
- Bacteria
- Parasites



## Treatment

Treatment of ear infections are usually done by cleaning the ears thoroughly and then applying topical medications to the ear. Many of these medications are applied at home, however longer lasting "ear packs" or "gels" are now available for pets that do not tolerate their ears being messed with. Most of these medications contain a corticosteroid to help with the itching and inflammation associated with an ear infection.

In recurrent cases, your veterinarian may perform a culture and sensitivity on the material collect from an ear swab. This will allow the specific cause of the infection to be determined, as well as the exact antibiotics needed to kill that bacteria. This is usually reserved for chronic or severe cases. Systemic antibiotics may also be needed in these more severe cases or if the ear drum has ruptured. Parasitic infections can be treated topically or systemically.

## Prevention

Prevention of otitis externa can be as simple as once to twice weekly ear cleanings or washings using an ear wash that is recommended by your veterinarian. These ear cleaners typically contain drying agents and even antibacterial properties. You will also want to make sure you wash ears out each time your pet swims or is bathed. Take care to not insert anything really deep into your dog's ear canal. A good rule of thumb is that as long as you can see the tip of the cotton swab, then you are safe. Do not clean your dog's ears so frequently or deeply as to cause irritation, as this can lead to infection.



Cast all your cares upon Him, because He cares for you.

1 Peter 5:7