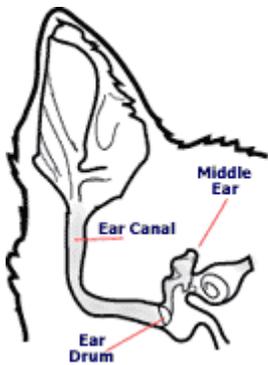




Ear Care

Ear infections are painful and irritating. Routine cleaning can help decrease the frequency and severity of infections. The key to a healthy ear is a clean ear. Here's what you can do to help keep your pet's ears clean.



The ear canal is long and shaped like an L. This means that debris, wax, and moisture can accumulate in the bend. Routine cleaning is required for some pets.

Luckily, the shape of the ear canal means that it is unlikely for you to injure the ear drum while

cleaning the ear, though you still need to be careful.

Cleaning

To clean your pet's ears:

1. Fill the ear canal with pet formulated ear cleaner.
2. Massage the base of the ear. You should hear a squishing sound.
3. Wipe the surface of the ear canal with cotton balls. (Cotton swabs may drive the wax deeper into the canal.)

Since moisture in the ear is ideal for growing bacteria and yeast, after your pet has been swimming, his or her ears should be cleaned. During a bath, you can place a cotton ball in the ear to prevent water from entering the canal. Just make sure to remove the cotton ball when finished.

Infections

You may need to see a veterinarian if the ears are red, swollen, smelly, have discharge, or are itchy. Other signs include shaking the head, scratching the ears, or tilting the head to one side. These are often signs of an infection and need specialized medicine. The doctor will take a small sample of the ear canal to determine what infection is present.

Cats and dogs typically have yeast or bacterial infections or a combination of both. Ear mites are possible, but not as common. The sample will be evaluated under a microscope to identify the organism and determine if additional testing needs to be performed. Once identified, the ear infection can be properly treated.

If your pet keeps getting ear infection after ear infection, regardless of how clean you keep his or her ears, there is an underlying cause. The most common one is allergies. This can be allergies to a food or to things in the air. Consult with your veterinarian about what you can do to determine the cause of recurrent ear infections.

