

Otitis Externa

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Overview

Otitis externa, commonly called an ear infection, is characterized by inflammation of the external ear canal and may be caused by yeast, bacteria or parasites. Ear infections are particularly prevalent in dogs with long, floppy ears. Otitis externa may affect 20 percent of dogs.

Dogs predisposed to otitis externa include those with genetic predispositions to abnormal ear canals, such as the Chinese shar-pei; breeds with hair in the ears like poodles and terriers; breeds with long floppy ears such as cocker spaniels; or outside and working dogs that are exposed to water or foreign bodies. Breeds prone to allergies are also at increased risk for ear infections, such as golden retrievers.

Diagnosis and Treatment Notes:

- Otitis externa is generally diagnosed by thorough physical examination, including an ear exam and microscopic examination of the discharge from the ear, and culture of the ear discharge to determine the underlying cause and the best antibiotic.
- Treatment depends on the severity of the disease, your individual pet, and your veterinarian. The majority of animals with an ear infection are treated with topical ear medication. Some are also treated with oral antibiotics and possibly steroids. Discuss treatment details when your pet is diagnosed with this condition.

What to Watch for*:

- Scratching or rubbing the ears
- Head shaking or head tilt
- Abnormal odor or discharge from the ear
- Pain when the ear is manipulated

**Please notify us if you notice any of the above signs or if you have any questions!*

