

# Ear Discharge

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## Overview

Ear problems are one of the most common ailments afflicting dogs and cats and may be due to infection, trauma, parasites or other diseases. Most often, the first sign is the presence of discharge from the ear.

Sometimes, mild discharge is normal. Some pets tend to produce more wax than others. For other pets, ear discharge is often a sign of trouble.

Pets with ear problems usually start scratching when the trouble begins. The trauma of scratching causes swelling and discharge within the ear canal. The ears may then develop a secondary infection with either bacteria or yeast. Diseases that suppress the immune system and immune skin diseases can also lead to ear problems. Dogs with floppy, hairy ears and dogs that swim may be predisposed to developing ear infections and ear discharge.

## Diagnosis and Treatment Notes:

- Ear discharge is typically diagnosed through history and physical examination. The cause of the discharge requires further testing such as cytology (examining the discharge under a microscope), bacterial or fungal culture, bloodwork, or allergy testing.
- Treatment depends on the underlying cause of the discharge, your individual pet, and your veterinarian. Treatment may include thorough ear cleaning, ear medication, oral medication such as antibiotics and/or steroids, allergy medication or even surgery. Discuss treatment details when your pet is diagnosed with this condition.

## What to Watch for\*:

- Ear scratching
- Head shaking
- Redness, swelling, discharge and odor from the ears

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