

## EAR DISEASE

### Why do cats and dogs get ear disease?

External ear infections are common in all cats and dogs. Animals with floppy ears, narrowed ear canals or excessive hair growth in the external ear canal are especially susceptible. The basic anatomical design of the external ear canal is also a predisposing factor. Dogs and cats have a vertical and horizontal ear canal creating an L- shaped configuration which provides for poor aeration and makes wax build up etc difficult to remove.

Some of the more common causes of external ear infections include water, soap, shampoo oil, powders, parasites (ear mites), wax accumulation and growths (polyps and neoplasia) in the ear canal. Multiplication of bacteria and fungi is favoured when inflammatory changes due to these various irritants are present.

### Clinical Signs:

Symptoms of external ear infections include:

- Constant head shaking, scratching/ rubbing of ears and face against objects.
- The animal may tilt its head to the affected side.
- Excessive ear trauma/ head shaking may result in a blood blister forming in the ear flap (aural haematoma) which requires drainage (possibly surgery depending on size).
- Hair loss around the affected ear.
- A smell and discharge may be noted from the affected ear.
- One or both ears can be affected.

### Diagnosis:

Diagnosis is from the clinical signs and otoscopic examination (cones with light illumination) which allow the veterinary surgeon to visualise the ear canal to the ear drum. In the case of suspected parasitic, fungal or bacterial causes swabs may be taken for microscopy (+/-culture and sensitivity to determine a suitable antibiotic).

### Treatment:

Treatment involves:

- Gentle cleaning (with saline or a specific ear cleaner e.g. “Epiotic”).
- Removal of hair from the affected ear.
- The application of ear drops (anti inflammatory, antibiotic or antifungal).
- In more serious cases, systemic antibiotics and anti inflammatories/pain killers may be needed.
- Surgery may be required for non responsive cases or those involving neoplasia.

One common mistake is periodic haphazard medication of the infection and not completely eradicating it, thus creating scar tissue in the ear canal and a resistant infection. To prevent this from happening, medicate as prescribed and have the ear canal examined by a veterinary surgeon to make sure it has healed correctly before stopping treatment.

### Prevention:

Keep water, soap and all foreign objects out of the ear canal. All dogs should have regular inspections of their ears to make sure that there are no obstructions to the opening.

<b>FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONSULT YOUR VET</b>
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## 耳部疾病

### 為何貓狗容易患上耳部疾病?

外耳感染炎症在貓狗很常見，尤其是有下垂長耳朵，狹窄耳道及太多耳毛的動物特別容易受影響。貓狗的耳朵構造亦使牠們特別容易患上耳朵疾病。牠們的耳道較長並且有垂直及橫向的耳道，形成 L 形，所以特別難通風，耳垢亦較難清理。

其他因素包括耳道內的水份、洗澡泡沫、洗髮露、耳蟲、耳垢、息肉及腫瘤等會令耳朵特別容易被細菌及真菌感染。

### 外耳感染炎症病徵

- 經常性搖頭, 擦耳朵或用臉部擦向物件
- 耳朵附近皮膚脫毛
- 受影响的耳朵可能會有分泌物及傳出臭味
- 嚴重外耳感染導致發生中耳炎的話, 動物可能會發生側頭情況
- 過度搖頭或擦耳朵可導致耳腫 (可能需要手術治療)

### 診斷

診斷外耳感染炎症要從病徵開始, 亦需用耳鏡檢查耳道。獸醫如懷疑有耳蟲、真菌或細菌感染的話, 可能需要抽取樣本在顯微鏡下檢查或送到化驗所作細菌培植。

### 治療

- 清潔耳道 (使用生理鹽水或洗耳水, 視乎情況而定)
- 將多餘的耳毛拔除
- 滴耳葯水
- 較嚴重的話需用口服抗生素及消炎止痛葯
- 如對葯物沒有反應的話或耳內有息肉/腫瘤需做手術

有一常見的問題就是不正確使用耳葯物。偶然地使用含抗生素的耳葯水不但對感染的病情沒有幫助, 反而使細菌等產生抗葯性。為防止這情況發生, 耳葯水及口服葯物務必根據獸醫指示使用, 並根據指示準時覆診, 以確保感染受控才可根據指示停止治療。

### 預防

保持耳朵清潔乾爽, 定期檢查及清潔耳道, 將多餘的耳毛拔掉。同時在洗澡時亦盡量避免水份及沐浴液等流進耳朵內。

欲知道更多有關詳情可請教你的獸醫