

## Ear Odor: A Sign of Infection

*Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff*



You've noticed your dog is scratching her ears vigorously, as well as shaking her head frequently. You've examined the ear, and can't see any evidence of dirt, but you do detect a foul odor. This is a tell-tale symptom of an ear infection.

In the clinic, we saw at least one dog with an ear infection every day. This is called otitis externa and it is estimated that up to 20% of the dog population is affected.

Odor may be the first thing you notice when the ear canal is infected. Some causes include parasites, bacteria, and yeast. Ear infections not only smell bad, but they can be painful for your dog. An ear infection has a brown or yellow waxy discharge with the foul odor. This can be caused by an overgrowth of yeast (most often called *Malassezia pachydermatis*) found in ear canals of some healthy dogs. Bacterial infections often happen secondarily to allergies or other problems. What happens is that the ear environment changes and leaves a perfect environment for bacteria and yeast to thrive.



Left untreated, an ear infection can work its way into the middle and inner ear, causing more serious concerns, as vital nerve structures and the equilibrium balance center are located in the middle and inner ear, respectively. If the infection remains untreated in the external ear canal, over time the external ear tissue becomes extremely thickened and cauliflower-like, which begins to obstruct the external ear canal.

A clean, dry ear is your best defense in keeping the

infection at bay. We recommend you clean your pet's external ear canal 1-2 times per week. Our Doctors' Choice remedy is [Drs. Foster & Smith Ear Clens® Pads](#). These convenient pads work gently, yet contain powerful anti-bacterial, anti-fungal ingredients that help change the pH in your pet's ear, making it much less likely to harbor the growth of yeast and bacteria. Simply toss these mess-free pads in the garbage when cleanings are done. For areas of the ear you cannot reach with a pad, squirt a few drops of [Drs. Foster & Smith Ear Clens® Solution](#) in the ear. This solution contains the same active ingredients as Ear Clens Pads.

