

Ear Care

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff

Selection Guide: Ear Care for Dogs

In the clinic we see 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 a foul odor. This can be caused by an overgrowth of yeast (most often called *Malassezia pachydermatis*) found in the ear canals of some healthy dogs. Bacterial infections often happen secondarily to allergies or other problems. What happens is that the ear environment changes due to conditions such as allergies, moisture, or hormone abnormalities, 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.



Products that can help

Otoscope - Our high intensity [Veterinary Quality Otoscope](#) lets you examine your pet's ears up close so you can detect ear conditions before they become problems. Lighted scope magnifies up to 10 times in high resolution and includes three cones for different sized ear canals.



Cleansing Pads - Keeping your pet's ears clean and dry is your best defense against ear infections. We recommend you clean your pet's external ear canal 1-2 times per week. Our Doctors' Choice remedy is [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.



Cleansing Solution - For areas of the ear you cannot reach with a pad, squirt a few drops of [Ear Clens® Solution](#) in the ear. This solution contains the same active ingredients as [Ear Clens® Pads](#).



Drying Agents - Relieve your pet's irritating ear itch and help prevent bacteria and fungal growth by keeping ear canals dry. Dry ears stay clean and healthy and odor-free. After weekly cleaning with liquid ear solution, simply hold the [Ear Powder](#) applicator tip about an inch from your pet's ears and squeeze directly into the ear. Powder makes gripping with a [hair puller](#) much easier when you need to "strip" ear canal hairs on certain dog breeds.



Ear Miticide - Ear mites can be a misery for your pet. Our effective pyrethrin [Ear Miticide](#) can eliminate these irritating, common parasites that your pet can pick up. If itchy ears are accompanied by a black, crumbly discharge, there's a good chance your pet has ear mites. And the constant scratching means that he'll be more prone to ear infections.



Ear Care Kit - A convenient way to keep everything you need to care for your pet's ears on hand is the [Ear Clens® Kit](#). The three products included in this kit will protect your pet's ears from inflammation by cleansing, killing mites (if your pet has them), and drying out moist ear canals.