Otoscope: How and Why it's used

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff

From time to time your pet may shake his head or scratch at his ears as if something is in them. At these times it is best to take your pet to the veterinarian and have her perform a thorough ear examination.

A dog's L-shaped ear canal makes it difficult to examine. A veterinary otoscope (a lighting device used to look into the ear canal) is the perfect tool for your veterinarian to use to detect ear problems early. Early detection and treatment means less expense for you.

The skin of the canal should be pale pink with normal wax being light tan in color. When your veterinarian looks into your pet's ear, she will look for:

1. **Redness**, which would indicate inflammation, possibly from allergies, scratching, or infection
2. **Unusual colored discharge**
   - Yellowish discharge would indicate bacterial infection
   - Dark brown, malodorous discharge may indicate a yeast infection
   - Dark brown, crumbly discharge may indicate the presence of ear mites
3. **Foreign bodies**, such as dirt, etc.
4. **Excess wax** in the canal, which may indicate a need for a change in cleaning protocol
5. **Change in texture** of the ear canal may indicate allergies or chronic ear infection
6. **Growths or developmental abnormalities**

Your veterinarian will also check the tympanic

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membrane (eardrum) to see if there are any abnormalities.

If your veterinarian sees any of the above problems, she may prescribe medications or, if your pet has ear mites (*Otodectes spp*), she may recommend the use of a miticide such as Drs. Foster & Smith Ear Miticide.

To prevent ear problems, follow a regular ear-cleaning schedule using the correct cleaning products such as Ear Clens Solution or Ear Clens Pads.

Recommended Ear Care Products

Ear Clens® Solution

Ear Clens® Pads

Ear Miticide

Otoscope

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