

Deafness in Dogs: A Common Process of Pet Aging

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff

deafness IN SENIOR DOGS

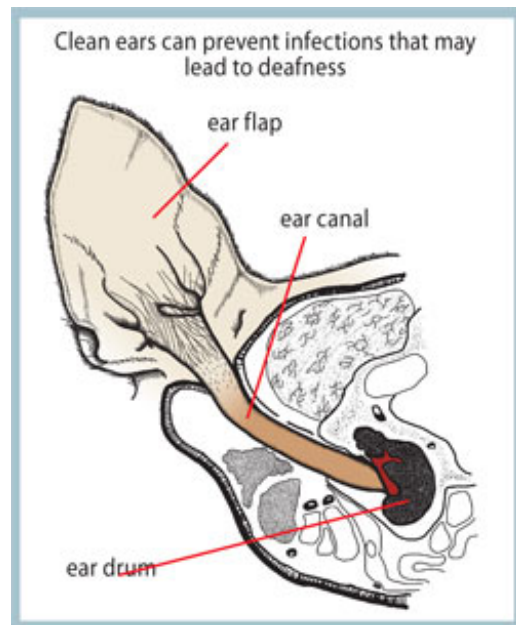
The canine ear is a delicate, complex sensory organ responsible for the detection of sound. Older dogs may suffer from a genetic propensity toward geriatric deafness or they may



experience hearing loss as a result of the common process of aging. Unfortunately, this affliction cannot be treated as straightforwardly as deafness in humans.

If your dog does not respond to customary auditory cues, it first needs to be determined if painful joints are causing him to stay put, seemingly oblivious to your commands. If there is a buildup of earwax or a severe ear infection, sounds will be muffled and/or inaudible. Even failing eyesight or blindness can affect the way a dog responds to sound. Additionally, dementia ([cognitive dysfunction](#)) can cause him to not understand what he hears.

At the first sign of pet hearing loss, visit your veterinarian for a thorough physical examination. The ear canal needs to be checked and blood tests performed to rule out infectious and metabolic diseases that can simulate deafness.



If the condition is indeed geriatric deafness, while there is no treatment, there are ways of managing the symptoms. Professionals such as veterinarians, reputable trainers, and veterinary behaviorists have resources to assist you in caring for your pet. They can recommend a routine that is not dependent on your dog's sense of hearing. Hand signals and other clues, such as a flashing light, thumping on the floor, or highpitched whistles can be used effectively.

