

## Ear Infections

Think of your standard poodle ear as an incubator for different kinds of organisms. There can be many reasons for ear problems. Unlike humans, the shape of a dog's ear canal is more vertical than horizontal (more straight up and down than at an angle that has natural drainage, similar to an L-shape.) As moisture and debris build up, infections can set in. Bacteria, yeast and fungi multiply in that warm dark environment. Moist conditions with a standard poodle's floppy ear and hair that continually grows is a great breeding place.

Remember to dry the ears well after bathing or swimming or even after playing in the rain. Moisture can be an enemy of the ear. Routine ear cleaning may reduce chances of infection but done too frequently or overly vigorous inner ear washes can be damaging to the ear canal. **Your Veterinarian** will advise you on the possible cause and proper care procedure. Dr. Google and friends might have solutions that work for them but each individual dog is different, be advised by your **personal Veterinarian** who has your dog in front of them where a proper diagnosis can be done. Ear infections can be the result of a bigger problem with the immune system, a topical "Do it yourself" treatment may help with the symptoms but not the underlying cause.

**Never, ever,** try to put anything directly inside your dog's ears unless your vet has directed it is safe to do so and they have shown you the protocol!! That includes pouring in any liquids or trying to insert cotton buds or Q-tips. You may push bacteria further down your dog's ear canal or damage their eardrum (tympanic membrane) or create a middle ear infection.

Also be wary of applying any home remedies to your dog's ears if they have any sores, open wounds or open scratches. Some ingredients in home remedies, such as cider or white vinegar, can sting and hurt your dog.

Other ingredients such as gentian violet, boric acid, are dangerous to your dog if it enters their system through their bloodstream. Ensure also that you don't use any products that may result in further allergies.

Always seek medical advice at the first onset, trying products without a diagnosis can do more harm than good.

### **CAUSES:**

**Yeast** - a natural organism in a dog's body to keep the immune system working can get out of balance and grows out of control. The balance of yeast in a dog's body and their

ears can be affected by any medications they are taking, other illnesses, hormonal imbalances, their diet and their daily activity. Yeast also thrives on sugar, so sugary treats or snacks can throw yeast levels out of balance.

**Ear mites** (parasite)...believe it or not they are contagious, if one dog has them another can get them.

If your dog has ear mites or a yeast infection their exterior symptoms and behavior may look similar. There may be signs of irritation and dark flecks or substances.

Dog ear mites are barely visible to the human eye, unlike fleas.

These little parasites feed off your dog's ear wax. An infestation of ear mites can lead to further bacterial infections. Yeast infections may look similar, but your dog's ears will often have an odor or funky smell.

**Bacteria** - Bacterial infections can be difficult to cure with home remedies. Cultures need to be performed to determine the type of bacteria.

**Excessive ear wax** - an over-production of wax as occurs in response to irritation.

**Trauma** from rubbing and scratching

**Foreign objects**

**Allergies** (to foods and external factors like pollens and grasses)

**Endocrine disorders** such as hypothyroidism or cushing's

**Tumors or polyps** - some cannot be seen by our eyes, Vet exam is necessary

## **SYMPTOMS**

odor

hot and painful to the touch

wet sound when massaged or the inside may seem abnormally moist

shaking of the head

tilting head

scratching

scabs or inflammation

reluctance to chew

altered sense of balance

## **DIAGNOSIS**

Cytology, which identifies if yeast, bacteria or other micro-organisms are present

Culture to determine which type of bacteria is present

Blood tests to rule out hypothyroidism, autoimmune disease or other underlying problems

## **TREATMENT**

Can be tricky, especially if allergies are involved. Treatment depends on the cause, nature and severity of the infection.

Usually:

antibiotic ointments, drops, sprays or creams

oral antibiotic

elimination diet if allergies are suspected

Surgery as a last resort

## **PREVENTION**

keeping ears clean

avoid moisture in the ear

treat problem as soon as discovered

know how to administer medication

follow up with Vet

It's important to complete all medication regimes, even if the ear looks better

<https://www.pethealthnetwork.com/dog-health/dog-diseases-conditions-a-z/ear-infections-dogs>

[https://www.petmd.com/dog/conditions/ears/c\\_multi\\_otitis\\_media\\_interna?page=2](https://www.petmd.com/dog/conditions/ears/c_multi_otitis_media_interna?page=2)