

## Ear Mites in Dogs and Puppies

### Overview

- Ear mites are tiny skin parasites that cause intensely itchy ears and often lead to ear infections.
- Any dog can catch ear mites but they are most common in puppies.
- The most common way for a dog to catch ear mites is from another dog, but they can also be picked up from the home, garden and environment.
- Fortunately, treating ear mites is relatively simple.
- Book an appointment with your vet if you think your dog may have ear mites.

### General information



Ear mites are tiny skin parasites that cause [intensely itchy ears](#), a build-up of earwax, and [ear infections](#). Ear mites can affect dogs of any age but are most common in puppies. They can also affect other animals such as cats and ferrets.

## How did my dog catch ear mites?

The most common way for a dog to catch ear mites is from another dog, but they can also survive in the environment for months so it's possible your dog could have caught them from your home, garden or while out and about.



## Symptoms

Ear mites tend to affect both ears and cause symptoms such as:

- [Itchy ears](#)
- Smelly ears
- [Red, painful, swollen ears](#)
- Rubbing face/head
- Ear wax (which is often dark brown)
- A swollen ear if an [aural haematoma](#) develops

## When to contact your vet

Always book an appointment with your vet for an appointment if you think your dog has an [ear problem](#).

**Am I eligible for PDSA veterinary treatment?**

## Treatment

### Ear mite treatment

- Your vet will give your dog a treatment to kill their ear mites (likely to be a tablet or 'spot-on').
- Your dog may need more than one treatment to make sure all their ear mites are dead.
- Ear mites are contagious so you will also need to treat any other dogs and cats in your household.

### Ear cleaner

- It's likely that your vet will prescribe your dog an ear cleaner for use at home.
- Once a day ear cleaning will help clear out any excess wax and debris from your dog's ears.

### Medicated eardrops

- If necessary, your vet will prescribe eardrops to help with [inflammation](#), pain and [infection](#).
- If your dog is given eardrops, make sure you follow the instructions and complete the course (even if your dog's ears seem better part way through).

### Treat your home

- Ear mites can survive in the environment for months so you will need to spray your home, and hot wash pet items such as bedding and grooming equipment.
- [Household flea spray](#) is effective against ear mites in the home but **never use it directly on an animal. Household flea spray often contains 'permethrin', which is highly toxic to many species including cats, fish and birds.**

## Ongoing care

You will need to keep an eye out for any returning symptoms and contact your vet if you are concerned. If your dog is prone to dirty ears, you may need to clean them from time to time. Ask your vet or veterinary nurse to show you how, or check out our video below.

**Never use cotton buds to clean your dog's ears.**

## [Video: How to clean your dog's ears](#)

### Outlook

If your dog's ear mite problem is treated quickly, they are very likely to make a full recovery.

### Home remedies for ear mites

There are many products on the market that claim to kill ear mites, but those available without a prescription are usually less effective than a licenced product from your vet. Always book an appointment with your vet if your dog has an ear problem. They will not only provide you with licenced, effective treatment but will also check your dog's ears for other problems. Leaving an ear problem for too long can lead to serious problems.

### Prevention

Regularly treating your dog for fleas is the best way to prevent ear mites. Many of the products we use to kill fleas or other parasites also kill ear mites.

### FAQ

**Can ear mites cause deafness?** Ear mites don't directly cause deafness, but left untreated they can lead to serious ear disease or infections that can cause hearing loss.

**Can ear mites cause seizures?** Ear mites don't cause seizures but left untreated they can lead to serious ear disease (such as middle or inner ear infections) which can cause a head tilt or loss of balance.

**Can humans catch ear mites?** It's extremely rare for humans to catch ear mites from a pet but it is possible. If you are worried or someone you know may have mites, it is best to contact your doctor, or the [NHS](#) for advice.

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