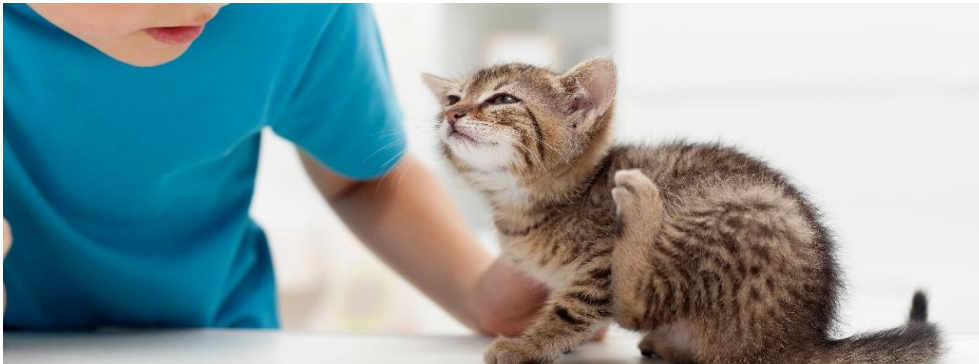


Ear Mites in Cats and Kittens

Overview

- Ear mites are tiny skin parasites that cause intensely itchy ears and often lead to ear infections.
- Any cat can catch ear mites but they are most common in kittens.
- The most common way for a cat to catch ear mites is from another cat, 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 cat 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 cats of any age but are most common in kittens. They can also affect other animals such as dogs and ferrets.

How did my cat catch ear mites?

The most common way for a cat to catch ear mites is from another cat, but they can also survive in the environment for months so it's possible your cat 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:

- [Head shaking](#)
- 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 cat has ear mites or an [ear problem](#).



[Am I eligible for PDSA veterinary treatment?](#)

Treatment

Ear mite treatment

- Your vet will give your cat a treatment to kill their ear mites (likely to be a tablet or 'spot-on').
- Your cat 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 cats and dogs in your household.

Ear cleaner

- It's likely that your vet will prescribe your cat an ear cleaner for use at home.
- Once a day ear cleaning will help clear out any excess wax and debris from your cat's ears.
- **Never use cotton buds to clean your cat's ears.**

Medicated eardrops

- If necessary, your vet will prescribe eardrops to help with [inflammation](#), pain and [infection](#).
- If your cat is given eardrops, make sure you follow the instructions and complete the course (even if your cat'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 cat 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.

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

Outlook

If your cat'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 cat has an ear problem. They will not only provide you with licenced, effective treatment but will also check your cat's ears for other problems. Leaving an ear problem for too long can lead to serious problems.

Prevention

Regularly treating your cat 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.

Published: Aug 2020