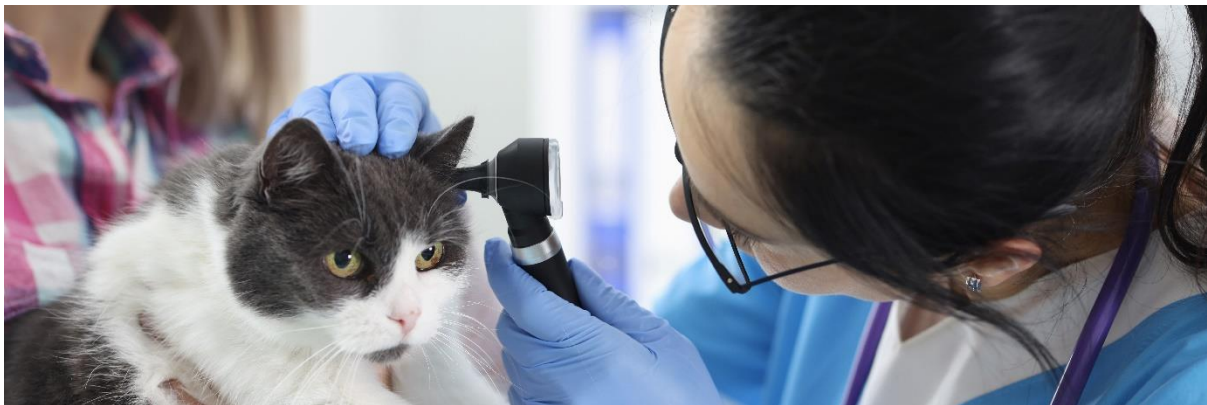


Ear Problems in Cats – an overview

Overview

- There are many different ear problems that can affect cats – this article gives an overview of some of the most common.
- Ear problems tend to be painful, irritating, and in severe cases can cause serious symptoms such as loss of balance and hearing.
- Always contact your vet if you notice your cat has an ear problem – the sooner treatment is started the better.

Common ear problems in cats



Some of the most common ear problems that affect cats include:

- **[Ear infections](#)** – an irritating and painful overgrowth of bacteria or yeast inside the ear, often caused by another underlying problem.
- **[Allergic skin disease](#)** – which causes red, inflamed, itchy skin and often involves the ears.
- **[Ear mites](#)** – tiny parasites that cause very itchy ears and infections.
- **[Aural haematoma](#)** – a blood blister in the earflap, often caused by an underlying problem that irritates the ear.
- **Ear polyps** – non-cancerous lumps inside the ear canal
- **Ear cancer** – such as a **[squamous cell carcinoma](#)** on the earflap.

- **Vestibular disease** – an inner ear problem that affects balance.
- **Ear injuries** – such as wounds and bites.
- **Foreign objects in the ear** – such as grass seeds.
- **[Severe allergic reactions](#)** – if both your cat's ears suddenly become very swollen, red and puffy, and they have swelling elsewhere (such as their face, eyes, nose or feet) this could be the beginning of an allergic reaction to something. If you think this is the case, call your vet immediately.

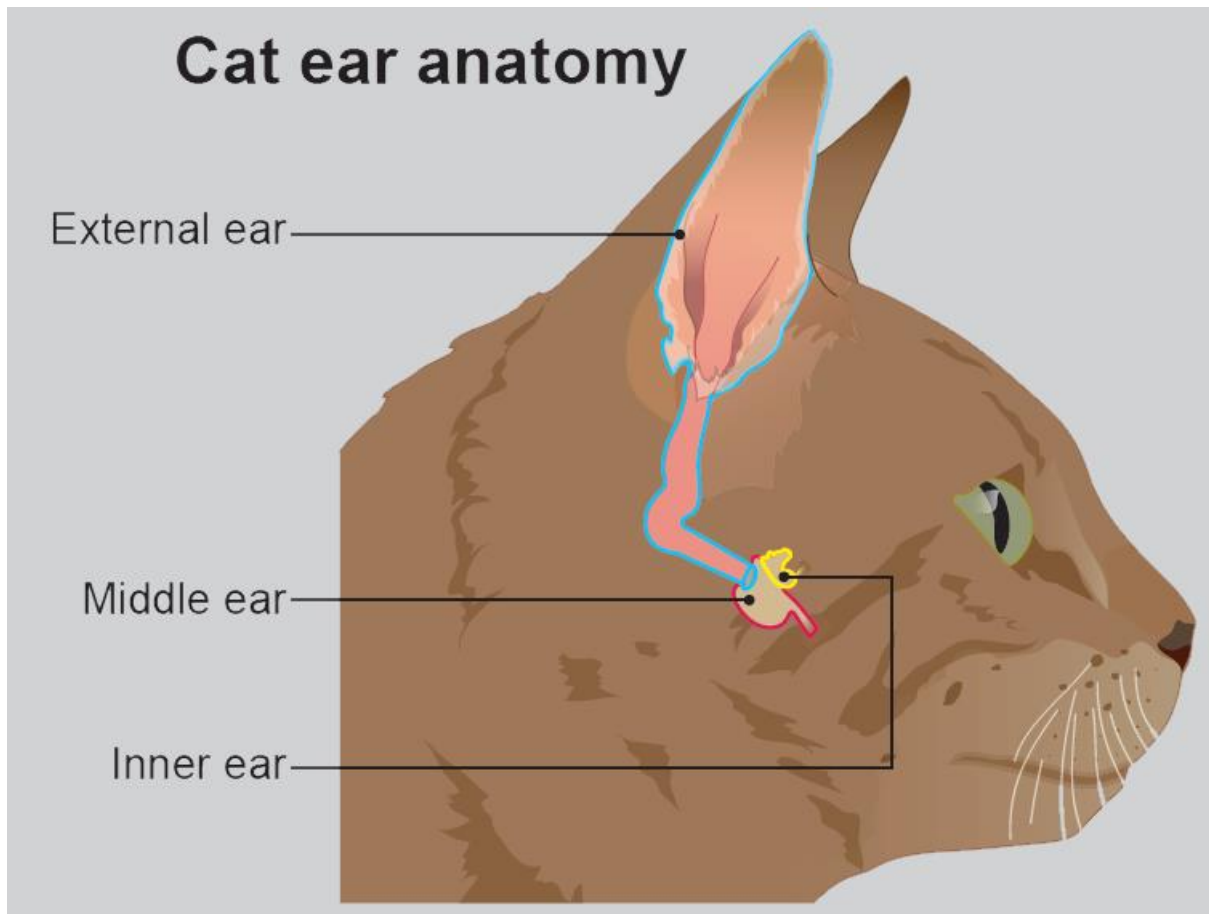
Symptoms of an ear problem

There are three main parts to the ear, the 'outer', 'middle' and 'inner' (see image below). If your cat has a problem with their outer ear (the flap and/or canal) they might have the following symptoms:

- Heat, swelling and itchiness
- Pain – your cat may become head shy or not want to be stroked
- A bad smell
- **[Head shaking](#)** and face rubbing
- **[A swollen, droopy earflap](#)**
- Discharge, dirt, excess wax or blood from the affected ear(s)

If they have a more severe problem that affects their middle or inner ear, they may also develop the following symptoms:

- A head tilt
- Loss of balance
- Flickering eye movements



There are three main parts to a cat's ear, the 'outer', 'middle' and 'inner'. The outer ear (in blue) is made up of the earflap and ear canal, and collects sound. The middle ear (in pink) transmits sounds, and the inner ear (in yellow) is responsible for hearing and balance.

When to contact your vet

Ear problems are painful, and often get worse over time, so it's important to contact your vet if you notice a problem. They will use an otoscope to look deep into your cat's ear to find out what's wrong.

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

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