

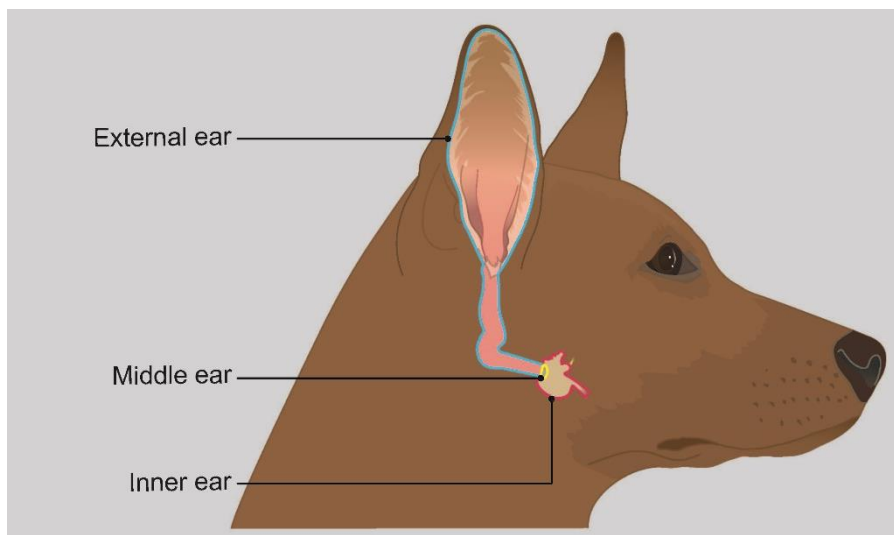
Ears problems in dogs - swollen, itchy, smelly, red, hot or sore?

Overview

A sore ear is not something to ignore. Ear problems can be very painful and need vet treatment to cure and find the cause. There are many different problems that can affect dog ears.

There are three sections of the ear that can become affected:

1. The external ear (ear flap and ear canal)
2. The middle ear
3. The inner ear (responsible for balance)



Structure of a dog's ear

Always contact your vet if you notice your dog has a painful ear.

Symptoms of ear problems in dogs

Signs of an ear problem include:

- Ear scratching
- Head shaking
- Smelly ears
- Hot, swollen ears, or a visible lump
- Discharge or blood from the ears
- Painful ears – your dog may not like you touching them
- Holding head on one side
- Clumsiness (loss of balance)
- Unusual eye movement

Causes of ear problems in dogs

There are many causes of ear problems in dogs:

Skin allergies

- Skin allergies, for example if your dog is allergic to fleas, pollen or food they may develop very itchy ears.

Ear infections

- Ear infections occur when bacteria or yeast overgrow in one or both ears.

Parasites

- Parasites for example ear mites.

Ear injuries

- Due to the large amount of blood vessels in the ears, injuries tend to bleed a lot. Read about first aid advice for wounds.
- Aural haematoma (a swelling in the ear flap)

Foreign bodies

- Objects stuck in the ear canal (like grass seeds).

Vestibular disease

- Vestibular disease is an inner ear problem that causes loss of balance.

Tumours of the ear

- Tumours of the ear can be benign or malignant; they often cause problems because of their location.

Middle ear infections (otitis media)

- Middle ear infections are deep ear infections that cause loss of balance.

Ear polyps

- Ear polyps are benign growths in the ear canal, similar to skin tags; they usually cause problems due to their location.

When to contact your vet

Ear problems are usually very painful. There are a variety of different causes so it is important to see a vet for advice if you notice any of the symptoms above. Your vet will use a special tool (otoscope) for looking deep into the ear to investigate and find out the cause of the problem.

You know your dog best. If they don't have the symptoms listed above but you are still concerned it's always best to contact your vet.

Which breeds are prone to ear disease?

Any dog can develop an ear infection but certain breeds are more prone. This is usually because the shape of their ears stops air flowing around the ear canal. This makes the ear moist and allows bacteria to grow and cause infections.

Some examples of breeds at higher risk of ear infection include:

- English Springer Spaniel
- Cocker Spaniel
- Pugs
- Newfoundlands
- French Bulldogs
- Shar Pei
- Bichon Frise
- Maltese
- Cavalier King Charles Spaniel

Published: July 2018