

Ear mites in dogs and puppies

Overview

- Ear mites are tiny parasites that can affect ears.
- Ear mites are especially common in puppies.
- Ear mites can be caught from other pets, but can also climb into your dog's ears from the environment.
- Ear mites cause an intense itch and often lead to ear infections.
- Treatment for ear mites usually involves a treatment to kill the mites and eardrops to settle any pain, inflammation and infection.



An ear mite.

What are ear mites?

Ear mites are tiny insects that like to live inside ears. They cause an intense itch, which can lead to pain, swelling, wax production and ear infections. Ear mites are most common in puppies but can affect any dog.

Symptoms

- Itchy ears
- Red, painful, swollen ears
- Rubbing face/head
- Small white dots (mites) moving inside the ears
- Smelly ears
- Waxy ears
- A swollen ear if an aural haematoma develops.



Ear mites cause an intense itch.

When to contact your vet

Contact your vet for an appointment if you suspect your dog has ear mites or any other ear problems.

How did my dog catch ear mites?

Your puppy/dog is most likely to have caught ear mites from another dog, but could also have caught them from elsewhere – ear mites can survive in the environment for months.

Can humans catch ear mites?

It's extremely rare, but not impossible for humans to catch ear mites from a pet. Interestingly, ferrets can also catch them.

Treatment

Killing the ear mites. Your dog will need a treatment to kill their ear mites. Your vet will be able to provide you with a safe and licenced product. This is likely to be in spot-on or tablet form. Treatment will often need repeating after a few weeks to make sure all mites are dead.

Treat all other pets. Treat any other cats and dogs that your dog is in regular contact with. Ear mites could be living in their ears or fur.

Ear drops. Your vet may prescribe eardrops to combat any inflammation, pain or infection. Make sure you follow the instructions and complete the course – even if your dog's ears seem better part way through. Ear cleaning can also be helpful to clear out wax and discharge.

Treat your home. You will need to hot wash all pet bedding and grooming equipment as well as treating your home. Flea spray will kill ear mites in the home.

Caution

Never use a household flea spray directly on an animal; it is especially toxic to cats, birds and fish.

Ongoing care and outlook

If your dog is prone to dirty ears, you will need to clean them from time to time. Ask your vet or vet nurse to show you how or watch

our video demonstrating how to clean your dog's ears. Never use cotton buds to clean your dog's ears.

Your dog is very likely to make a full recovery once their ear mites have been treated by your vet.

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. We recommend seeing your vet if you suspect your dog or puppy has ear mites – they will provide you with an effective treatment and check their ears for any other problems. Leaving an ear issue untreated for too long can lead to serious problems.

Prevention

Regularly de-fleaing and deworming your dog is the best way to prevent ear mites. Many of the products we use to kill fleas and worms 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, deep-seated ear disease which can cause deafness.

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. Serious ear disease often causes symptoms such as a head tilt or loss of balance.

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