

Symptoms

Signs of an ear problem can include:

- Ear scratching
- Head shaking
- Smelly ear(s)
- Hot, swollen ear(s)
- Discharge or bleeding from the ear
- Painful ear(s) – your cat may not want to be stroked
- Head tilt (holding head to one side)
- Loss of balance
- Flickering eye movements

Causes

There are many different ear problems your cat could develop:

Skin allergy

If your cat is allergic to something such as fleas, pollen or something in their food, they may develop very itchy ears.

Ear Infections

Ear infections occur when bacteria or yeast overgrows inside the ear.

Parasites

Parasites such as ear mites cause an intense itch and often lead to ear infections.

Ear injuries

Ears bleed a lot – read our first aid advice.

Aural haematoma

If a blood vessel inside the ear bursts, it's likely to cause a blood blister in the ear flap called an aural haematoma.

Something inside the ear

Sometimes objects (such as grass seeds) get stuck inside the ear and cause irritation.

Tumours

Tumours on/in the ear can be benign or malignant. Two common tumours are squamous cell carcinomas on the ear flap and polyps inside the ear.

Vestibular disease

Vestibular disease is an inner ear problem affects balance.

When to contact your vet

Ear problems are often very painful so it's important to see your vet for advice if you notice any symptoms. Your vet will look deep into the ear with an otoscope to diagnose the cause.

You know your cat best. Contact your vet if you're concerned.

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