

Head shaking in cats

Overview

- Has your cat been shaking his/her head more than usual?
- Head shaking shouldn't be ignored because it can indicate many different problems, usually related to the ears.
- Book an appointment with your vet if you have noticed your cat shaking their head more than usual.



Why do cats shake their heads?

Occasional head shaking is perfectly normal but regular head shaking often indicates a problem. Common causes include:

- Ear infection
- Aural haematoma
- Ear mites

- Something stuck inside the ear (foreign body)
- Ear injury
- Allergic or inflammatory skin disease
- A lump (growth) in the ear

Tell your vet if you have noticed any other symptoms such as itchy ears, smelly ears, face rubbing or loss of balance. If you take a careful look inside your cats, ears you may even see that one (or both) of them look red, swollen or gunky.

When to contact your vet

Contact your vet for an appointment as soon as you notice your cat shaking their head more than usual. Your vet will be able to find the cause, treat it, and relieve their irritation.

Head tremors

It's important to know the difference between a head shake and a head tremor. A head shake is when your cat shakes their head on purpose, a head tremor is when they develop a shake that they can't control. If your cat suddenly develops a head tremor (a shake they cannot control), contact your vet for an emergency appointment.

Published: Aug 2019