

Ears Problems in Dogs - an overview

Overview

- Does your dog have swollen, itchy, smelly, red, hot or painful ears?
- Never ignore an ear problem; they can be very painful and without veterinary treatment, can get much worse.
- Contact your vet for an appointment as soon as you notice a problem.

General information

This article is an overview of ear symptoms and conditions that affect dogs. For more information, follow the links within.

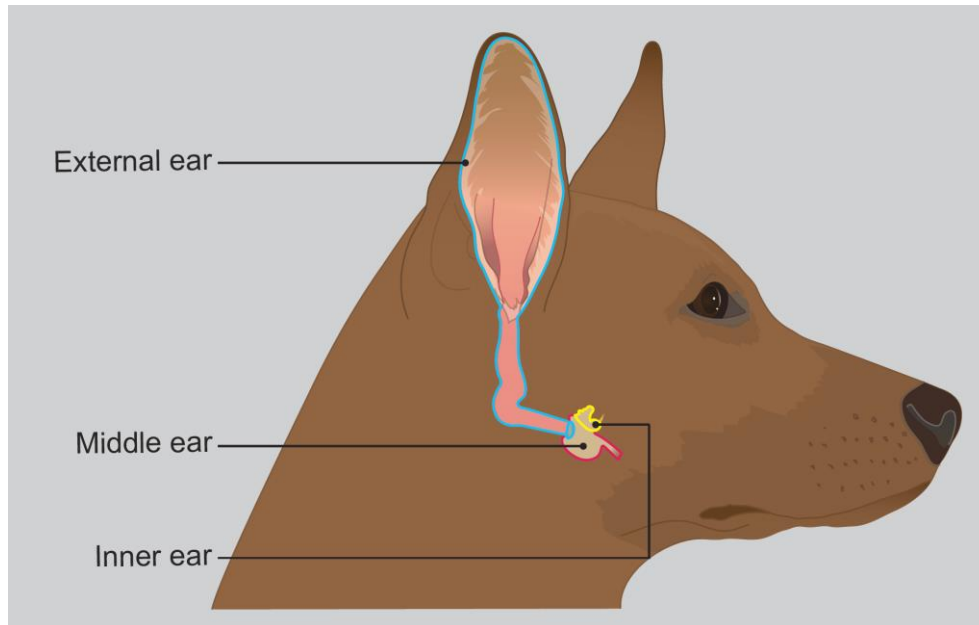


Symptoms

There are three main parts of the ear (see diagram below), symptoms of an ear problem depend on which part of the ear is affected.

- The external ear is the ear flap and canal which collect sounds (in blue)
- The middle ear transmits sounds (in pink)

- The inner ear is responsible for hearing and balance (in yellow)



Common symptoms of an ear problem include:

- Ear scratching/rubbing
- Head shaking
- Smelly ears
- Discharge or blood
- Heat and swelling
- Pain
- A dirty or very waxy ear
- Head held to one side (middle/inner ear problem)
- Loss of balance (middle/inner ear problem)
- Flickering eye movements (middle/inner ear problem)

When to contact your vet

Contact your vet for an appointment as soon as you notice a problem with your dog's ear(s), ear problems are painful and can quickly get

worse if left without treatment. Your vet will use a special instrument (an otoscope) to look into the ear and investigate the problem.

Find out whether you are eligible for free or low cost PDSA veterinary treatment using our checker below or visit www.pdsa.org.uk/eligibility

Conditions

Some common conditions that affect dog ears include:

- **An infection** - caused by bacteria or yeast overgrowth.
- **Allergic skin disease** - itchy skin lining the ear caused by an allergy to things such as fleas, pollen or certain foods.
- **Ear mites** - a parasite that causes intense itching
- **Injuries** – bites, bangs or tears
- **Aural haematoma (a swollen ear flap)** - caused by a burst blood vessel.
- **Objects stuck in the ear** - (such as grass seeds).
- **Vestibular disease** - an inner ear (highlighted pink in image below) problem that causes loss of balance.
- **Ear polyps** - benign growths in the ear canal, similar to skin tags.
- **Tumours** - both cancerous and non-cancerous.

Breeds prone to ear disease

Any dog can develop an ear problem, but certain breeds are more prone, often due to the shape of their ear or the amount of hair inside their canal. Breeds with an increased risk of ear problems include: English Springer Spaniel, Cocker Spaniel, Pug, Newfoundland, French Bulldog, Shar Pei, Bichon Frise, Maltese and Cavalier King Charles Spaniel

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