

Ear infections: Epiotic ear cleaner is your friend

The dog days of Summer are upon us and with that hot humid summer weather comes a spike in the number of ear infections. Ear infections are most likely to occur in hot humid weather but they have been known to occur even in the dead of winter.

Most animals have a small amount of bacteria and yeast on their skin. Given the right conditions that bacteria and yeast can overgrow and cause an ear infection. Bacteria and yeast grow better in warm, dark, moist environments. Having upright ears makes a dog less likely to get ear infections since their ears tend to stay drier. The classic ear infection waiting to happen is a dog with hairy long floppy ears that loves to swim. Some breeds are notorious for ear infections. Cocker Spaniels and Bassett Hounds tend to get more than their fair share of ear infections. Animals with a history of allergies also tend to be more likely to get ear infections.

How do you know if your dog has an ear infection? Yucky discharge (black or yellow) indicates an ear infection. Normal ears should have a small amount of tan ear wax in them. Copious amounts of discharge in you dog's ears is a clear sign of an ear infection. There will also be an unpleasant odor to your dog's ears. The ears may be red and inflamed and your dog may scratch his/her ears more often than usual.

If you notice any of these symptoms it is time to call your vet and get your pet examined. We will perform a full exam of the ear and look at the ear canal and eardrum with an otoscope (the same instrument your doctor uses to look in your ears). We will also take a sample of the discharge and look at it under the microscope to see what exactly is causing the ear infection. This helps us to choose the correct medication to treat your dog's ear infection right the first time. Treatment of an ear infection involves putting medication in the ears twice a day and frequent ear cleaning.

By now you are probably wondering what you can do to avoid getting an ear infection in the first place. The answer is cleaning your dog's ears with Epiotic ear cleaner once a week for maintenance. You should also clean your dog's ears after swimming and bathing to remove the water from the ears. Remember moisture in the ears causes ear infections. Feel free to contact us for a free demonstration of how to clean your dog's ears.

How to clean your dog's ears:

1. Fill the entire ear canal with Epiotic ear cleaner.
2. Massage the base of the ear vigorously. You need to do this BEFORE your dog shakes his/her head. You will hear a slurpy swishy sound which is the ear cleaner sloshing around in the ear canal. This breaks loose any debris and helps bring it to the surface.
3. Let your dog shake if he/she wants to.
4. Wipe out the ear canal thoroughly. You can use gauze squares, cotton balls, or pieces of an old t-shirt. Insert your finger into the ear canal as far as it will comfortably fit. In a large dog you may be able to fit your finger in as far as your second knuckle.
5. Repeat the process until you are no longer getting any debris out of the ear.