

Virbac

Looking after your  
**pet's ears**

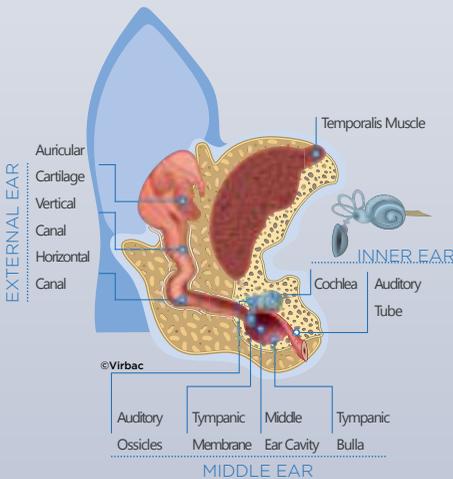


# What is Otitis and how does it start?

**Otitis literally means inflammation of the ear canal and it can affect any pet at any age.**

Some pets have abnormal ears with narrowed ear canals, excessive hair or excessive moisture providing the perfect environment for bacteria and yeast to multiply and therefore cause otitis. Pets who swim regularly can also be at risk as their ears don't tend to fully dry out.

It's not, however, just pets with abnormal ears who develop ear problems. Pets with normal ears can develop otitis because of things like allergies or foreign bodies finding their way into the ear, such as grass seeds or parasites, like ear mites!



Lastly, a pet who has had otitis in the past may be more prone to getting the disease throughout its life as there may have been (irreversible) changes to the lining of the ear canal or it may have an underlying problem that causes the ear infection to reoccur.

No matter what the underlying cause is, these factors will lead to inflammatory changes to the skin lining of the ear canal which can be very uncomfortable and irritating for your pet. Often, this causes them to scratch their ears, irritating the skin further and possibly introducing more bacteria into the ear canal.

This inflammation narrows the ear canal creating an environment that is warmer and more humid than normal, which again provides the bacteria and yeast with the perfect environment for them to grow in!

*Unlike our ears, pets have very long and horizontal ear canals which means that debris may become lodged deep inside the ear and go on to cause irritation and possibly infection. Regular cleaning can help towards removing this debris.*



## What are the signs that your pet has otitis?

- Head shaking
- Scratching
- Redness or swelling of the skin in the ear
- Pain around the ears
- Unpleasant odour
- Discharge
- Changes in behaviour
- Other dogs licking at your dog's ears

# Can I prevent Otitis?

Checking your pet's ears regularly is the best way of monitoring ear health allowing you to take appropriate action in order to reduce the risk of your pet developing otitis.

There may be some instances that otitis develops for reasons beyond your control showing little symptoms beforehand. This is why routinely checking your pet's ears and perhaps incorporating regular ear cleaning into your routine is helpful in the fight to prevent potential problems from occurring.

It is a good idea to use a **quality**, anti-bacterial, non-acidic ear cleanser. ”

## IMPORTANT:

If your pet has more than two episodes of otitis per year, you must draw this to your vet's attention, as repeated bouts of otitis can cause long term thickening of the skin in the ear, which over time can lead to chronic problems. Recurrent otitis is often a sign of underlying skin disease that requires regular life-long management.



In instances where your pet is more likely to develop otitis, for example: has floppy ears, is a regular swimmer, has been diagnosed with an allergy, or is prone to dirty and/or smelly ears, it is a good idea to use a quality, anti-bacterial, non-acidic ear cleanser. Please speak to your vet who will advise on frequency.

It is very important that you contact your vet as soon as possible if your pet is showing signs of ear discomfort or the ear is not looking or smelling 'normal' to you. The earlier that you treat otitis, the better the outcome.



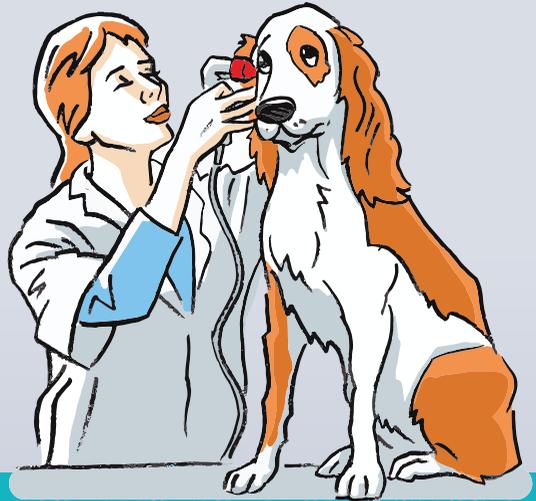
## How is Otitis treated?

Your pet's otitis may be treated in a number of ways. If you have noticed it early, you may be advised to increase the frequency of ear cleaning with a combination of an anti-inflammatory treatment, and that may be sufficient.

If the otitis has progressed, the most common treatment prescribed is a preparation containing an antibiotic, a steroid and an anti-yeast agent. Please ask your vet about the best treatment option for your pet.

It is often a good idea to clean your pet's ear before treating it, ensuring the treatment can have the maximum effect in the ear, but please seek advice from your vet first as some treatments cannot be used with a cleanser. (Please see page 5 for tips on cleaning your pet's ear).

You may be advised to increase the **frequency of ear cleaning** ”



## When do I use an Ear Cleanser?

**Ear cleansers can be used for routine maintenance ear cleaning or as an addition to most good ear treatments. When using in combination with a treatment for an ear infection use ear cleanser before the treatment to ensure that the ear canal is clear from wax, pus and debris. Please check with your vet to see if your ear treatment recommends regular cleaning during treatment.**

Ear cleansers may be used after ear treatment at advised regular intervals to help reduce the possibility of the recurrence of ear infections and to maintain a healthy clean ear. You should aim to use it once or twice a week especially in pets with abnormal ears.

**Ear cleansers** can be used to help maintain a **healthy clean ear** ”

# Choosing an Ideal Ear Cleanser

Consult your veterinarian when choosing an ear cleanser. A ear cleanser should have these properties.

- pH neutral and formulation well-balanced, therefore designed to be gentle to the skin in the ear but effective
- A drying effect in the ear, so becomes ideal to use if your pet's ears have excessive moisture and the climate is extremely humid
- Supportive anti-microbial action
- Anti-irritant properties and ingredients to soothe the ear and prevent any further aggravation of symptoms

- Neutralize & not merely mask the foul odour associated with ear infections

## Guidelines to use EPIOTIC® (once recommended by your vet)



- 1 Turn the white nozzle to open. Place the nozzle in the entrance of the ear canal and squeeze in to the ear canal, filling it.

- 2 Distribute the cleanser in the ear canal by gently massaging at the portion at the base of the ear externally. Massage for 10 to 20 seconds to ensure good cleansing of the vertical and horizontal ear canals.

- 3 Your pet is likely to shake its head. This is perfectly normal. Use a cotton ball or soft tissue to wipe any excess ear cleanser and dirt from the outside of the ear that has been dislodged by the ear cleanser. Under no circumstances should you insert a cotton bud to clean your pet's ear.

**Be aware that once you have finished cleaning the ear, your dog will naturally want to shake its head, which may release a small spray of ear cleanser into the surrounding areas**

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