

# ASK OUR VETERINARIANS



## Why do dogs get ear infections?

Oh no, is your dog scratching his ears or shaking his head? These are the key signs associated with ear infections in dogs. Most often, ear infections are related to underlying allergies, be it to something in the food or the environment. Other reasons can include frequent swimming or bathing, plucking the hair in the ear canals, or abnormal ear canal shape. In regards to allergies, the most common food allergies are related to the protein sources, notably chicken and beef. In addition, anything inside or outside the house could also be an allergen for your dog. Allergies ultimately cause inflammation that typically manifests as itchy and red skin/ears. This inflammation can set them up to get an overgrowth of bugs like yeast and bacteria which makes the discomfort and itchiness even worse. When the clinical signs or ear canal discharge is noted, it is important to seek veterinary care. A swab of the material in the ear canal will be looked at under the microscope to determine what type and how severe the infection is, in order to determine the most appropriate treatment plan for your pet. Treatment for ear infections usually involves a topical medication put into the ear canals for a set period of time. Rechecking with your veterinarian is also an important part of the treatment to ensure the infection is resolved and to further discuss potential allergies. The bottom line is that when your dog develops an ear infection, the most important question is why. Underlying conditions like allergies are often to blame.

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