

Cleaning your Pet's Ears

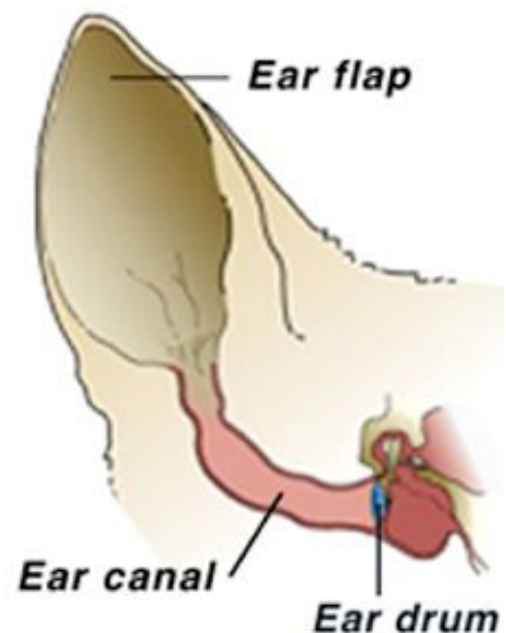
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The steps below describe a good method to use in cleaning out the ear canals of dogs and cats. But first, a little background information on the ear itself.

For our purposes, the ear will be thought of in 2 parts:

1. The ear flap (also called the pinna) - The ear flap is the part you see on the outside of the animal's head. It either stands up straight, or hangs down to the side, depending on the breed.
2. The ear canal - The ear canal begins with the hole located at the base of the ear flap and then continues on into the head toward the ear drum and inner ear. This ear canal is "L" shaped in dogs. It curves inward towards the skull rather than going straight in like ours does. That bottom section of the "L" can trap moisture, wax, and debris. This makes a nice home in which bacteria and yeast can overgrow, resulting in itchiness, redness, discharge, and the unpleasant odor often seen with ear canal infections. It's this shape to the ear canal that influences our cleaning method.

- Lift the ear flap and hold it with one hand, exposing the entry "hole" to the ear canal.
- Fill the first ear canal to the top using only a product that is specifically a dog/cat ear cleaner. DO NOT use peroxide, alcohol, etc. Massage base of ear to loosen any debris making a swishing/ sucking noise.
- Using a gauze pad, or cotton ball, gently wipe away the material. Do not use Q-tips.
- Repeat with other ear.
- Regular maintenance involves cleaning ears once per week. If there is an active ear infection, clean ears every other day.



Remember: If you are using medication in your pet's ears, clean the ears first, wait 30 minutes then apply medication.