



**Good Friends  
Animal  
Hospital**

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***Ear Care***

The ear canal is a deep curved structure. The lower ear canal does not drain well and accumulates dirt, wax, and moisture. This leads to microbial growth and odors if the ears are not cleaned regularly. Dogs most at risk for ear infections are those with long floppy ears, narrow ear canals, hair growing in their ears or dogs that frequently swim.

The key to a healthy ear is a CLEAN ear. The ear canal is long and has a sharp bend. It is almost impossible to damage the eardrum when cleaning. To clean the ear, fill the ear canal with medicated ear cleaner and massage the base of the ear. You should hear a squishy sound. Then wipe out the surface of the ear canal with cotton balls or a washcloth. Don't use cotton swabs that can pack wax deeper into the ear and can cause irritation.

Pets with long hair around the ear should be groomed to improve air circulation to the ear. If hair is growing in the ear canal remove it with a tweezers or hemostat. This does not hurt. Give special attention to cleaning the ear after swimming or bathing. When bathing, place a cotton ball in the ear to prevent water from entering the canal and be sure to remove it afterwards.

Have your pet's ears examined by a veterinarian if the ear looks red, there is a build up of wax, or there is an excessive ear odor. Other signs of trouble include head shaking, pawing or scratching at the ears, or tilting the head. Some pets with allergies or seborrhea will have chronic problems with their ears. Proper cleaning will go a long way toward controlling those problems.