



Otitis Externa, Media and Interna

Diagnostic Plan

History
 Physical examination
 Ear examination
 Ear cultures
 Thyroid hormone levels
 Intradermal skin testing
 X-rays
 Therapeutic trials with insecticides and hypoallergenic diets

Therapeutic Plan

Removal of ear-canal hair
 Ear cleaning
 Topical application of antibacterials/corticosteroids
 Systemic antibacterials
 Systemic corticosteroids
 Surgery

Nutritional Plan

Nutrition based on individual patient evaluation including body condition and other organ system involvement or disease

Otitis Externa, Media and Interna

Your pet has an inflammation of the external, middle or inner ear. Ear inflammations are common in pets and have many causes. Most ear inflammations can be treated successfully and specifically with medications after appropriate diagnostic tests are completed. Surgery may be necessary for advanced cases. This client education sheet will help you learn more about these inflammations and will review your veterinarian's instructions for your pet's care at home, as well as follow-up with the veterinary health care team.

What You Should Know About Otitis Externa, Media, Interna

The ear is divided into four parts: the pinna, the part outside the head; the external ear canal; the middle ear, found on the inside of the eardrum; and the inner ear, which consists of tubes and nerve structures that transmit sound to the brain. The inner ear also helps control your pet's balance.

Animals with droopy ears and/or a great deal of hair in the ear canal seem to have the most problems with ear inflammations. These characteristics plus the warm and enclosed nature of the ear canal provide an excellent environment for infectious agents that cause inflammation.

Causes

Bacteria, fungi and ear mites are common causes of ear inflammation in dogs and cats. Allergies, seborrhea, an underactive thyroid gland, trauma, foreign objects (such as plant seeds) and tumors also cause ear inflammation.

Most cases of middle ear and inner ear inflammation are caused by bacteria that pass through a ruptured eardrum. One cause of a ruptured eardrum is overzealous cleaning of the ear canal. Throat infections may also cause middle ear inflammations.

Diagnosis

Examination of the ear canal and eardrum by your veterinarian with an instrument called an otoscope helps determine the cause. If the ear is very painful, your pet may need to be sedated for a thorough exam. Other tests include: microscopic examination of earwax; ear cultures; thyroid hormone studies; X-rays; surgical biopsy; and therapeutic trials with hypoallergenic diets.

Treatment and Home Care

Disease of the ear must be treated persistently and specifically. Specific therapy includes: parasiticides for ear mites; thyroid hormones for an inactive thyroid gland; antibiotics for infections; anti-inflammatory medication and hypoallergenic diets for allergies; and removal of foreign bodies and tumors. In some cases, therapy may need to be continued for six weeks or longer.

In most cases your veterinarian will need to clean your pet's ear and remove the hair from the ear canal before therapy will be effective. The use of medications to dry the ears is helpful. Surgery may be necessary if the ear canals are closed, if tumors are present or if fluid is present in the middle ear.

Home care usually includes administering medications directly into the ear canal. These medications should be instilled into your pet's ear(s) according to your veterinarian's instructions. Once instilled, the medication should be massaged gently into the ear canal. If you cannot give medications as directed, call your veterinarian. Failure to properly administer ear preparations could lead to chronic inflammation.

Nutritional Plan

If your pet has an ear inflammation, your veterinarian may suggest a dietary change. Animals with suspected allergies to food that result in skin and ear disease may benefit from a fixed-formula dietary product formulated from nutrients to which they normally aren't exposed. Such foods include Hill's® Prescription Diet® d/d® Canine and d/d® Feline Skin Support and Prescription Diet® z/d® Canine and z/d® Feline Low Allergen. If your pet has had surgery to correct chronic ear disease your veterinarian may recommend a diet with increased levels of protein and energy to assist in your pet's recovery. Such foods include Hill's® Prescription Diet® a/d® Canine/Feline Critical Care.

Transitioning Food

Unless recommended otherwise by your veterinarian, gradually introduce any new food over a seven-day period. Mix the new food with your pet's former food, gradually increasing its proportion until only the new food is fed.

If your pet is one of the few that doesn't readily accept a new food, try warming the canned food to body temperature, hand feeding for the first few days, or mixing the dry food with warm water (wait ten minutes before serving). Feed only the recommended food. Be patient but firm with your pet. This is important because the success or failure of treatment depends to a large degree on strict adherence to the new food.

Presented as an educational service by



Home Care Instructions

Client's Name: _____

Patient's Name: _____

Medication(s): _____

Nutritional Recommendation: _____

Follow-Up Appointment: _____

(Hospital Stamp Area Above)

REGULAR VISITS WILL HELP OUR VETERINARY HEALTH CARE TEAM PROVIDE FOR YOUR PET'S BEST INTEREST.