



## Otitis Externa

Otitis externa means inflammation of the ear canals. Ear canals can be infected with mites, bacteria or yeast. Overgrowth of normal flora of yeast and/ or bacteria are common and result from any condition that increases humidity (moisture) within the ear canals. By far the most predisposing cause of Otitis externa is skin allergy.

Skin allergies cause inflammation of the ear canals which in turn causes overgrowth of the normal germs (particularly yeast cells). Many dogs with skin allergy also bite their feet, rub their belly or anus on the ground or just scratch generally although some only ever have Otitis externa. Other predisposing causes of Otitis externa are swimming, small ear canal openings and very hairy ear canals.

### **There are three steps to successfully managing Otitis externa:**

#### **Step 1 - Ear cleaning**

I recommend malaseb shampoo diluted 0.5 ml of malaseb mixed in 15mls of luke warm water. Ears should be cleaned once daily for 3 weeks, then once weekly from then on.

#### **Step 2 - Clearing up infection –**

Sometimes it is necessary to instil ear ointment twice daily for 3 weeks to completely clear up infection. No one ointment can kill all germs, so if good improvement is not seen within 5 days consult the vet.

#### **Step 3 - Preventing recurrence of Otitis externa –**

There is always a reason why dogs develop Otitis externa . If the underlying cause is not addressed, recurrence is likely. If allergies are suspected, these must be controlled as well as possible ( see skin allergy handout).

Weekly cleaning as previously described will help to prevent recurrence. Aquaeear contains alcohol (to dry ear canal) and acetic acid (to inhibit germ growth). Aquaeear can be applied after swimming, washing, ear cleaning and any other time.

**Always be on the lookout for ear scratching, head shaking and grubby ears as these are signs of Otitis externa. If you are unsure please contact Pound Road Veterinary Clinic for further advice**