

# Pawsitive Press

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## Caring for your pets ears

**By: Wade Matthews, D.V.M.**

Pet owners are able to take excellent care of the part of the ear we can easily see but the challenge comes with the ear canal which is the part between the opening of the ear and the ear drum. The ear canal in pets is twice to three times as long as our ear canal. This is where most of the problems are in pets. The external ear canal is a long tube which extends from the ear flap to the ear drum. It does not drain well so it retains moisture and is lined by ceruminous glands which produce wax for the canal. These glands need to produce wax to keep the ear canal healthy, too much or too little can cause problems. The ear canal is a great place for yeast and bacteria to grow because of the moist warm environment. There are also parasites that infect the canal and these are seen mostly in puppies and kittens.

Pets are often presented to the veterinarian for an ear that is infected, and often, that infection is but a part of a much larger problem for the pet. Allergies in Florida are very common and can be a major factor in ear canal disease. It is common for pets that have recurring skin problems to also have ear issues. This is the same



disease in a different location. The two primary tests that are used to help with ear canal problems are a good look at the canal with an otoscope exam and a cytology exam. It is impossible to see 75% of the ear canal without an otoscope. A pet's ear canal has a 90 degree turn midway into the canal and is difficult to see sometimes with an awake patient especially if the ear is uncomfortable. Cytology is important to distinguish between different types of bacteria and yeast so the appropriate medicines are dispensed.

There are several considerations when prescribing treatment of ear disease. One factor that makes treating ear disease a problem is that the ear canal is surrounded by cartilage and it does not have a very good blood supply. Oral antibiotic medication is not very effective against ear canal disease. Topical medication is generally required to treat ear canal disease. These diseases typically cause our pets discomfort and this can make topical medication

difficult to use. There are times when anesthesia is necessary to clean out the ear correctly. This removes most of the infectious material and allows the medicine to work much better. If we feel that the ear disease is a part of an overall allergy problem we may use oral medication to decrease the inflammation.

The best way to stop ear canal problems is to never have them start. There are many "cleaning solutions" available over the counter. No one solution works the best. Ask your vet what prevention plan would be best for your pet. When your veterinarian knows what the type of bacteria, or that yeast are the problem, he or she will be able to make a decision as to what cleaning program would work better for your pet. Taking a few minutes a week to clean your pet's ears may well stop them from having problems.

When your pet experiences problems with their ears, timely consultation with a veterinarian will not only help take care of a small problem before it becomes a larger one but also save you money at the same time.



# BREAK THE CYCLE

## 13 WAYS TO KEEP YOUR HOME FLEA-FREE

### OUTSIDE

1



SECURELY CLOSE UP ALL CRAWL SPACES  
KEEP DEAD LEAVES AND OVERGROWN BRUSH  
AWAY FROM THE HOUSE FOUNDATION

2



CUT THE GRASS, REMOVE WEEDS AND ELIMINATE  
LEAF DEBRIS FROM THE LAWN AREA AND FROM  
AROUND THE BASE OF TREES

3



FLEAS PREFER HUMID, SHADY, AND MOIST AREAS  
AND DO NOT THRIVE IN HOT, SUNNY LAWNS

4



DISCOURAGE STRAY ANIMALS AND WILDLIFE  
THAT CAN BRING FLEAS ON YOUR PROPERTY  
REMOVE UNEATEN PET FOOD AND FOOD BOWLS  
SEAL TRASH IN CLOSED-LID CONTAINERS AND  
OUT OF REACH OF WILDLIFE OR STRAY ANIMALS

5



FENCE OFF PROPERTY TO KEEP STRAYS AND  
WILDLIFE OUT OF YARD AND AWAY FROM HOUSE

6



AVOID ELEVATING STORAGE BUILDINGS

7



REGULARLY INSPECT DOG HOUSES AND BEDDING FOR FLEA INFESTATIONS

VACUUMING, CLEANING AND DISINFECTING WILL NEED TO BE COMPLETED REGULARLY

8



REGULARLY CLEAN SOFT CUSHIONED LAWN FURNITURE THAT IS LEFT OUTSIDE, AS IT CAN PROVIDE THE WARM AND MOIST ENVIRONMENT WHERE FLEAS THRIVE

9



REGULARLY VACUUM THE INSIDE OF YOUR VEHICLE IF YOUR PET TRAVELS WITH YOU OFTEN

# INSIDE

10



CURTAINS ABSORB WARMTH FROM THE SUN OR HEATERS AND ACCUMULATE DUST/ PET DANDER

VACUUM CURTAINS OR, IF POSSIBLE, WASH IN HOT WATER AND HANG TO DRY IN THE SUN

11



WHEN ANIMALS SLEEP IN OUR BEDS, FLEAS OF ALL STAGES CAN BE FOUND IN BEDDING

WASH BEDDING FREQUENTLY IN HOT WATER AND HANG TO DRY IN THE SUNLIGHT

12



WHEN ANIMALS SIT, WALK, AND SLEEP ON FURNITURE FLEAS OF ALL STAGES CAN BE FOUND IN THE FABRIC AND CUSHIONS

VACUUM SURFACES, MAKING SURE TO REACH DOWN BETWEEN THE SIDES AND SWEEP THE CREVICES OF THE FURNITURE.

13



DUST AND PET DANDER CAN ACCUMULATE IN CARPET THREAD

A VACUUM WILL PICK UP EGGS AND ADULT FLEAS, BUT FLEA LARVAE WILL CLING TO CARPET

FLEAS CAN BE FOUND IN THE CRACKS BETWEEN THE BOARDS OF HARDWOOD FLOORING



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