

# ANIMAL HOSPITAL OF LANESVILLE

1849 Highway 11 Lanesville, IN 47136 (812) 952-3643

## Ear Diseases

By Dr. Rene Wingerter

When you see your dog or cat **shake his head, scratch his ears, or whine and cry as he rubs his head on the ground**, you should suspect an ear problem. Don't be tempted to medicate or start any home remedy until the veterinarian has had a chance to examine your pet.

There are three main causes of ear irritation: mites, yeast and bacteria.

**Mites** are tiny little bugs that can be seen under a microscope. They can cause your dog or cat to scratch so severely they will actually tear the skin on the back of the ears. It is no longer necessary to apply medications over and over again. Now there are drops that only need to be applied once as long as you treat all dogs, cats, rabbits and ferrets exposed to the infected animal.

**Yeast** are normally present in the ear canal but in certain conditions, they will over grow and cause a dark brown, smelly discharge. Certain conditions such as warmth, moisture and darkness encourage the yeast to grow. Excessive accumulations of hair and wax also favor yeast overgrowth. **Often yeast infections are chronic, life-long problems that need regular care.** To keep yeast under control, keep hair plucked or trimmed from the ear canal, keep the ear clean using special cleansers, and try to keep other factors such as excessive moisture and allergies under control.

**Ear infections** are the most serious of ear diseases. These infections often develop when other conditions such as yeast infections, ear mites, food sensitivity and allergies go unnoticed. Complete cleaning, frequent rechecks and correct antibiotic therapy are all necessary for control of ear infections. Often this means a culture and sensitivity test to determine the type of bacteria and which antibiotic is needed to treat the infection.

**To clean your pet's ears**, simply fill the ear canal with one of the special cleansing solutions or use 1/2 cup of vinegar mixed with 1/2 cup of water. Use a bulb ear syringe and flush the ear repeatedly. Gently massage the side of the head and flush again. Repeat with the other ear, then allow the pet to shake. When he is done shaking, use a tissue or a cotton ball to wipe out any discharge you can see. Do not probe deep into the ear with cotton swabs.

Remember; don't ignore ear problems hoping they will take care of themselves. Early and complete treatment is always best.

If you have any questions or concerns, please call us at the Animal Hospital of Lanesville at 952-3643. 📞

Pet's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Test Results \_\_\_\_\_

Treatment Plan \_\_\_\_\_

Recheck \_\_\_\_\_