

Medical

Ear Infections In Dogs

Texas A&M University Newswire

Many dog owners have witnessed their pet excessively scratching their ears or rubbing their head on a hard surface. Some owners may even notice redness, swelling, or odor in their dog's ear canal. Although we may do everything we can to keep our dogs clean, these common signs could be a result of a canine ear infection.

According to Dr. Alison Diesel, clinical assistant professor at the Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences, canine ear infections are common and can be caused by multiple factors. "There are several contributing factors associated with the development of ear infections in dogs," she said. "Some factors, such as excess hair in the ear canals, excess wax production, and increased moisture, can contribute to the development of ear infections; however, they do not solely cause the infection. There is generally an underlying cause, such as parasites, allergies, or foreign bodies. Other causes include hormone imbalances, benign or cancer-

ous growths in the ear canal, or physical trauma."

If you think your dog may have an ear infection, it is important to consult your veterinarian. Treatment for canine ear infections depends on the underlying cause of the infection as well as the specific type of infection involved. Ear cleaners or topical medications, such as ear drops or lotion, are common in soothing canine ear infections. Sometimes, additional medications may be necessary to decrease swelling in the ear canals or treat infections that have migrated into the deeper structures of the ear, such as the middle or even inner ear.

Although it may seem as simple as thoroughly cleaning your dog's ears to relieve them of irritation, Diesel recommended avoiding home remedies for an ear infection. "Some medications can be harmful or painful when used in certain infections," she explained. "For example, the use of a medication containing antibiotics may contribute to the development of bacterial resistance if used improperly. It is best to consult your pet's veterinarian prior to treating the ear infection at home. If you have a cleaner your veterinarian has prescribed for ear infections in

the past, this may be tried initially; however, a follow up examination should be pursued if clinical signs persist."

You may bathe Fido regularly, but this does not protect him from developing an ear infection. To effectively prevent canine ear irritation, be sure to check your dog's ears weekly for debris and wax build up. If your dog swims a lot or has a history of ear infections, you should talk with your dog's veterinarian about using an ear cleaner periodically as maintenance.



"In some cases, long-term maintenance ear care, such as periodic ear cleaning, may be helpful to help prevent infections," Diesel said. "To address this most effectively, it is important to have a conversation with your pet's veterinarian to help develop a long-term plan. Discussing particular activities your pet likes and or concerns you have will help your veterinarian formulate a righteous

preventative care plan. For example, if you frequently plan on taking your dog swimming, your veterinarian may recommend an ear cleaner that has some drying properties for use after swimming. A veterinary dermatologist can also be an additional helpful resource for long-term ear care in your dog."

To prevent your dog from developing an ear infection, remember to clean their ears regularly. Ear infections are one of the most common health problems in dogs, but it is not a con-

dition that should be treated at home without the guidance of a veterinarian. Be sure to seek professional help in treating your dog's ear infection.

Pet Talk is a service of the College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences, Texas A&M University. Stories can be viewed on the Web at vetmed.tamu.edu/pet-talk. Suggestions for future topics may be directed to editor@cvm.tamu.edu. For more news about Texas A&M University

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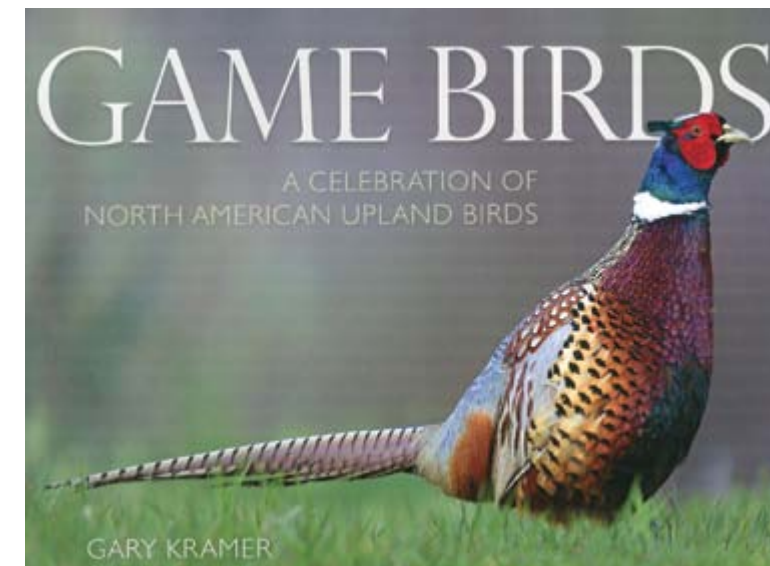
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