



## Ear Mites

### Diagnostic Plan

History  
Physical examination  
Ear examination  
Microscopic examination of ear canal exudate

### Therapeutic Plan

Ear canal cleaning  
Drugs to kill the mites  
Surgical repair of aural hematomas  
Antibacterials, if needed

### Nutritional Plan

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

## Ear Mites

Your pet has ear mites. Ear mites are parasites that live on the skin's surface, especially on the skin lining the ear canal. Ear mite infestations are treated with insecticides. This client education sheet will help you learn more about ear mites 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 Ear Mites

Ear mites are contagious. They are transferred from animal to animal by direct contact. Ear mites and eggs can persist in the environment for several months. They can then return to reinfest your pet.

### Signs

Ear mites account for most ear problems in cats and a significant portion of those in dogs. Although all dogs and cats in a household may be affected, most serious problems occur in puppies and kittens.

Irritation of the glands that produce earwax leads to the formation of thick reddish-black wax and crusts that fill the ear canals. Most pets rub and scratch the affected ear. Ear twitching and head shaking are common. The ear may even be traumatized from pawing and head shaking. Bacteria and yeast may aggravate the ear canal inflammation.

Occasionally, ear mites leave the ear canals and infest other parts of an animal's body. Hair loss in a particular area and reddened, scratched skin suggest such an infestation.

## Diagnosis

A history of recent contact with other animals followed by the onset of head shaking and scratching and pawing at the affected ear suggests a diagnosis of ear mites. The diagnosis will be confirmed by your veterinarian when he or she examines your pet's ear canals with a special magnifying instrument called an otoscope. Ear mites or eggs are found during the examination. Ear mites can also be found by examining your pet's earwax under a microscope.

## Treatment and Home Care

First, your veterinarian will thoroughly clean your pet's ear canals. Appropriate insecticidal medications can then be used to kill the mites. Treatment may be necessary for several weeks in order to kill newly hatched mites. Flea powders, sprays, shampoos, or dips may be used to treat those mites that are on your pet's body but not in its ear canals. Because ear mites readily infest other animals, all pets in the household should be treated. The household itself may be treated with flea-control foggers or sprays to lessen the chances of reinfestation. Antibacterials and medications to relieve inflammation may be needed in complicated cases.

## Nutritional Plan

If your pet has ear mites, your veterinarian may suggest a dietary change based on your pet's age and body condition, the degree of infestation and tissue damage, and the presence or absence of disease in other organs and body systems. Nutrition is especially important for optimal growth and proper development of the immune, or protective, system in puppies and kittens. Optimal nutrition should also reduce the health risks associated with feeding excess levels of nutrients such as calcium and phosphorus, which could cause skeletal problems, and excess calories, which could cause obesity. Foods that avoid excess levels of harmful nutrients include Hill's® Science Diet® pet foods.

## 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). However, do not add water to your cat's food. Feed only the recommended food. Be patient but firm with your pet.

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## 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.