

Quick, Easy Ear Cleaning Prevents Infection and Illness

by

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You can learn a lot by looking into your dog's ears. Look frequently, and you can even prevent infections and diseases from ravaging your dog's body. Insects, dirt and wax buildup, for example, can lead to infection.

Indeed, the ears are where grooming and health care come together. This routine can help keep your dog's ears clean, odor-free and healthy.

1. Place your dog on a grooming table or have him lie his head in your lap. If the dog has floppy ears, fold back the flaps. (Cropped or naturally erect ears are easily visible.)

2. Look carefully. Healthy ears are pink; red could be a sign of infection or inflammation. Do you see something in one ear but not the other—discharge, dirt or other particles or objects? Even a tiny foxtail bristle can cause major discomfort. Some earwax is normal and healthy, but an excessive amount or change in color or consistency may be cause for concern.

3. Do the smell test. If the ears have a strong odor or unusual smell, or if your normally cooperative dog whines or pulls away when you touch his ears, health problems such as infection or allergies may be to blame.

SIGNS OF TROUBLE

Consult a veterinarian immediately if your dog exhibits any of these conditions:

- tilting, shaking, rubbing or scratching his head and ears more than usual;
- hair loss around the ears as the result of excessive scratching;
- excessive oily or waxy debris in the ear canal;
- black debris that looks like coffee grounds in the ear;
 - discharge of any kind;
- redness or inflammation;
- foul-smelling ears; or
- soreness to the touch.

Bacterial infection, fungi or allergies can account for many of these signs, but coffee-ground like debris usually indicates ear mites. These microscopic parasites cause severe itching and require medical treatment. A vet will usually treat the infestation with an insecticidal ointment for at least 10 days.

A holistic approach may include dietary supplements, herbal remedies and oils that soothe the ear and smother mites. (Check with your vet as to the effectiveness of such an approach.) Excessive scratching can lead to secondary infections, and frequent head shaking can result in blood clots in the ear flaps.

Check the dog's ears as part of your regular grooming routine to identify problems early and avoid these complications.

EASY AS 1-2-3

Regular cleaning prevents oil and wax buildup. Although a certain amount of earwax is normal and healthy, an excessive amount can provide a fertile environment for fungi and bacteria. To clean a waxy or dirty ear:

1. Dampen a cotton ball with a non-irritating ear cleanser, available in pet supply stores (ask your veterinarian to recommend one). *DO NOT USE ALCOHOL, ESPECIALLY IN A RED, INFLAMED EAR.* It can cause severe irritation. Avoid homemade remedies unless approved by your veterinarian.

2. Wrap the cotton ball around your finger and insert your finger into the dog's ear canal and wipe. Vets and professional groomers may use applicators such as cotton swabs, but these could cause damage if used incorrectly. Cotton balls are safer.

3. Work from the inside out. You may need more than one cotton ball if the ear is extremely dirty. Clean folds, crevices and the inside of the ear flap. Wipe thoroughly but gently.

Certain dogs, such as Poodles, grow hair inside the ear canal. Some people regularly pull out this hair to improve airflow in the ear canal, thus preventing infections and infestations. Others believe hair pulling irritates the ear, is painful and can lead to secondary bacterial infection. Ask your vet what is best for your dog. Inspect and clean your dog's ears as part of his weekly grooming regimen and you can help keep your dog healthy as well as beautifully groomed. □



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 Show Secretary — Pam Jarmon
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Three Rivers SSC of Greater Pittsburgh — February 2, 2013
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 Breed: Linda C. More
 Sweepstakes: Terry Jennings
 Obedience and Rally: Jeff Showman
 All-Breed Obedience: Janet Lewis
 Event Secretary — Clantyre Show Secretary Services
 Rhonda Toren, 5474 Delphinium Ct. Columbia, MD 21045
 (410) 997-3698

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How to Familiarize Your Pet With A Pet Carrier

Whether you're planning a move with your pet, planning a getaway to a pet friendly hotel or just taking Spot or Fluffy with you to run errands around town, making sure they are properly secured in your vehicle is essential.

One of the best ways to ensure that your precious pet stays safe in your vehicle is to have him travel in a pet travel carrier... also known as travel kennel and crate. However, before you do, it's important to know the right way to do this. You must be sure to properly familiarize your dog or cat with the carrier before you set out on your road trip. The time it takes to do this depends on your pet.

It's best to start your dog or cat out at an early age. It generally takes longer for your pet to become comfortable in a travel carrier as they get older. The first step is to choose the proper carrier. When shopping for a travel carrier, be sure it has proper ventilation and sturdy construction. In addition, the carrier should have a secure latch so that your pet cannot escape. As far as size, the carrier should be large enough for your pet to stand up, turn around, and lie down comfortably. The price of a pet carrier varies depending upon the size, whether it's hard sided or soft sided, and the brand. The starting price is generally around \$20.

To familiarize your pet with the carrier, open the door of the carrier and place it in your home. Place your pet's bedding, some favorite toys and maybe some treats of his until your pet feels comfortable. Again, this may take a little time so be patient and don't rush him.

When you are confident that your pet feels comfortable in the carrier, you can then place the carrier in the car. Start off by taking short rides and gradually build up to longer rides. Gauge the stress level of your pet and don't push it. Short rides can be up and down the driveway if need be.

Ensure that your pet travel is safe. Pet travel carriers are a great option to ensure the well being of your pet when traveling by car. Just remember to start the familiarization process early if you have upcoming travel plans. Safe travels!

TripsWithPets.com is the #1 on-line resource for pet travel. It was named BEST pet travel site by *Consumer Reports!* TripsWithPets.com offers resources to ensure pets are welcome, happy, and safe when traveling. The website features a directory of pet friendly hotels and accommodations across the U.S. and Canada, airline and car rental pet policies, dog friendly beaches, search by route, pet travel tips, pet travel supplies, along with other pet travel resources.

This timely newsletter is being sent out for FREE to Sheltie fanciers who requested more up-to-date information about Shelties and their activities. Past newsletters are posted on our secure website (www.sheltie.com) under "The Telegram."

E-mail us timely articles and announcements which you think should be shared among other Sheltie folks.

CAPTION CONTEST!

In each issue we'll print a photo and you can send in what you think are appropriate captions. Enter as many times as you wish (they don't have to be mailed or e-mailed separately). We'll print the caption we judge to be the best, along with those worthy of honorable mention.

The winner receives a free business card ad in the next 3 issues of the magazine! Honorable mention winners receive a free business card ad in 2 issues of the magazine.



First place—Nan McClure:

"Which do I eat first—the chicken or the egg?"

Honorable Mention—Jesse Hatfield (Hatfield's Shelties):

"I've heard of chicken a la carte, but what's this chicken under foot?"

Honorable Mention—Vicki Betker (Shimoda Shetland Sheepdogs):

"Here Kitty, Kitty, Kitty. Glasses...what glasses?"

Honorable Mention—Mary Jean Simpson (Fifesong):

"Where is Colonel Sanders when you need him?"

Honorable Mention—Billie Adams (Lakewood Shelties):

"Looks like the Colonel is going to have a little competition with the cooking tonight."

Honorable Mention—Karen Coombs (Arenray Shelties):

"Original or Krispy? I'll take original please!"



The photo above needs a caption. Send all captions and any color photos you'd like to submit to: s.pacesetter@sheltie.com.