

# Does your Dog Have Itchy Ears?

Guelph, ON

Does your dog shake their head frequently, scratch incessantly at their ears or have smelly, dirty or itchy ears? In dogs, allergies can appear as ear infections and can be recurrent and hard to get rid of. Dogs with allergies may also have itchy paws and red skin in their armpits or bellies. Dogs can be allergic to anything people can be allergic to including dust, pollens in the environment and foods. Environmental allergies like grasses and trees can show up as seasonal events. Affected dogs might get itchy for a few weeks every spring or maybe just in the fall. Allergies to food or indoor allergens such as dust tend to bother dogs more consistently and may seem present all year.

If your dog's ears need attention, see your veterinarian or Board Certified Veterinary Dermatologist. They can help determine if allergies might be the reason for your dog's discomfort and can offer options to help alleviate the symptoms.

Some solutions are short term to bring relief and resolve the smelly, dirty, itchy ears. This usually includes traditional daily at-home ear cleaning or medication for 1-2 weeks. There are also treatments your veterinarian can administer to your dog in the clinic; these single or double dose options provide the same type of results as traditional ear medications, saving pet owners the struggle of treating their dog's ears at home.

Part of managing allergies involves determining what the pet is allergic to. This can be frustrating for pet owners but is essential for providing pets with relief. Options like intradermal and serologic allergy testing and/or diet trials may help in this process. Once the cause of the allergy is better understood, control may involve additional options like shampoo therapy, topical, oral or injectable medications or immunotherapy. For food allergic dogs, diet trials where food intake is limited to a specific diet can help determine which foods are an issue for pets and your veterinary team can provide hypoallergenic, hydrolyzed, novel ingredient or limited antigen options that eliminate these allergens from your pet's diet. Food can also be used to support skin health and alleviate symptoms for dogs with environmental allergies. The best solution can be different for each pet; pet owners must work with their veterinary team to find the right option for their pet.

## For more information:

Colleen McElwain  
Canadian Animal Health Institute  
(519) 763-7777



Photo Source: Anthony Yu, Yu of Guelph Dermatology

**Are your dog's ears smelly, dirty or itchy?  
These are clear indicators that your dog's  
ears may need attention.**