



## Doggone Ear Infections

Dogs hear the darnedest things, but their ears' construction makes them especially prone to infection. The ear canal drops down and turns sharply before meeting the eardrum, creating dark, dank grounds for infection-causing bacteria and yeast to overgrow when exposed to moisture, explains Robert Silver, DVM, a holistic veterinarian in Boulder, Colorado. Floppy-eared dogs are even more susceptible because their canals don't get much air-flow to help dry moisture.

If your pup's prone to infection, after he dunks in the lake or tromps through the snow, Silver suggests using a solution of one part acidic apple cider vinegar and one part astringent witch hazel to lower pH and up the

ears' natural infection-thwarting power. If his canals are inflamed or he's been scratching, swap witch hazel for nonstinging spring water.








Pour the mixture into the ear canal; fill to the brim, and then compress the canal with your thumb and fingers. Keeping your dog still, vigorously massage the entire length of the canal from the outside—it's OK to give it a good squeeze. After a few minutes of kneading, let him shake his head, and then clear out any remaining solution with a light towel. Repeat for other ear.

Chronic infections may stem from food allergies or sensitivities, so a holistic vet can help make appropriate dietary changes.

—JAYME OTTO

## 'Supp, Dog?

When your kids get diarrhea or upset stomachs, you give them probiotics. But what happens when your pet poops on your Tibetan rug or hacks up a mucousy mess of mouse parts? Turns out you can pump *him* with probiotics too. In fact, dogs and cats can benefit from several supplements you take, say holistic vets. Compared to many pet-specific versions, "human supplements are manufactured to higher standards of cleanliness, purity, and potency," says Jean Hofve, DVM, author of *The Complete Guide to Holistic Cat Care* (Quarry Books, 2009). But not all supps are fit for four-legged consumption. Hofve and Michel Selmer, DVM, a holistic vet at Advanced Animal Care Center in New York, offer these do's and don'ts. —VICKY UHLAND

HUMAN SUPPLEMENT	SAFE FOR	WHY?	DOSAGE
Antioxidants (vitamins C and E, Co-Q10, beta-carotene, quercetin, Pycnogenol, anthocyanadins, blue-green algae)		Protect against heart disease and inflammatory conditions ending in "itis" (arthritis, cystitis, colitis). <i>Note:</i> Alpha lipoic acid can be toxic for cats.	Divide 150 by pet's weight to find the correct percentage of human dose
Digestive enzymes (amylase, lipase, protease)		Prevent allergies; help nutrient absorption.	Half the human dose per meal
Fish oil		Improves skin, coat, and immune- and nervous-system functions; treats allergies, arthritis, cancer, and kidney and heart diseases.	See antioxidants
Glucosamine and chondroitin		Relieve arthritis and bowel and bladder diseases.	See antioxidants
Probiotics		Treat gastrointestinal problems and food allergies.	Full human dose
Garlic		Damages red blood cells.	None
Vitamin A and minerals (manganese, zinc, iron, copper)		Most pet foods contain enough; too much can be toxic.	None