

Topical ear treatments

- Keep this leaflet safe, as you may need to refer to it again.
- Please ask your vet or veterinary nurse if you have any further questions.
- This medicine has been prescribed for your pet ONLY. Do not take it yourself or give it to another person or any other animal; it may harm them even if their symptoms appear to be the same.

This leaflet applies to a range of drugs that are applied to the ear. They include drugs that combat organisms that can infect the ear (e.g. antibiotics for bacteria and antimycotics for yeast) as well as steroids which can help reduce inflammation and swelling. Some of these preparations contain more than one drug. Topical ear treatments are sold under a variety of trade names.

How do I give topical ear treatments to my pet?

Topical ear treatments are not painful but your pet may find the sensation of drops/ointment being administered inside the ear canal strange or unpleasant. It is good to provide your pet with a small treat (food or toy) or additional attention prior to applying any drops/ointment. This helps them relax and creates a positive emotional state so that drops can be applied. Always reinforce your pet's good behaviour with lots of praise. If at first your pet does not cooperate, be patient and try again a few minutes later. Even nervous pets will usually get used to the procedure. If you are struggling to apply drops, especially if your pet is becoming distressed, it is better to contact your vet for advice rather than force the drops upon your pet.

- Clean the ear with an appropriate cleaner at least 20 minutes before you apply topical ear treatment so that the ear is free of wax and debris.
- Hold the medication in your dominant hand and, with your other hand, gently pull your pet's affected ear flap up and backwards, exposing the ear canal. The ear canal in a dog contains a right-angled kink so gently stretching it in this way will facilitate penetration of the drops.
- If you need to hold your pet's jaw to support their head, you can hold their ear flap backwards using two fingers of the same hand that is holding the medication.
- Place the funnel of the medication bottle a short way into the canal and then, either by pushing the pump or squeezing the bottle as required, administer the dosage as prescribed.
- Gently rub the base of the ear against your pet's head in a circular motion. You should hear a 'squishing' sound as you massage the medication into the ear canal.



- Release the ear and allow your pet to shake their head. Use a cotton ball to gently wipe away any accumulated debris or drops from the ear flap.

Why has my pet been prescribed topical ear treatments?

Your pet will have been prescribed topical ear treatments to treat an infestation (such as ear mites) or infection (such as a bacteria or yeast) of the ear. The most common condition is called otitis externa, which means an inflammation of the passage of the outer ear. Ear infections are serious as, if untreated, they can lead to ruptures of the eardrum, balance problems and potential deafness.

How should I store topical ear treatments?

Some topical ear treatments do not contain preservatives. Thus, once opened, they should be stored in a refrigerator and replaced after the period stated on the instructions, even if you have not finished them. Return any unused or leftover medication to your vet practice for safe disposal. Medication should be taken out of the fridge and left to reach room temperature before being administered. Please read the leaflet for each ear treatment that has been dispensed for your pet carefully and follow the storage advice. For safety, **all medicines should be kept out of the reach and sight of children.**

How long will my pet require topical ear treatments?

Your vet will advise you on the length of time for which you will need to give this medicine. This may vary between animals. Most vets will ask owners to bring their pet back part way through the course or at the end to ensure they are making progress and the ear is improving. Always complete the course of treatment your vet has prescribed, even if your pet seems to be well. If your pet's condition worsens before your check-up is due you should contact your vet.

What should I do if I run out of topical ear treatments?

Try not to run out of treatment. Make sure you order more from your vet if your supply is getting low. If you do run out, contact your own vet for further advice and restart the course as soon as possible. ▶

The Prescribing Cascade

Some topical ear treatments are authorized for use in dogs/cats/pets. However, on occasion, your veterinary surgeon will need to prescribe a medicine not authorized in veterinary species. In these cases, the medicine is authorized for use in human patients and is being used by vets under the 'prescribing cascade'. The medicine is not authorized by the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD), an executive agency of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), for use in dogs/cats/pets. Your vet can explain the 'prescribing cascade' in further detail to you and also explain why they are prescribing this drug for your pet. You will be asked to sign a consent form stating that you understand the reasons that the drug is being prescribed and its possible complications, before the treatment is issued.

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How often should I apply topical ear treatments?

The frequency of ear treatment administration can vary, for example they may be required every 12 or 24 hours. For treatments required more than once a day, your vet will advise you to split the frequency of application evenly during the waking hours. Medication application will also need to be managed alongside cleaning the ears using an ear cleaner. Check with your vet if you are uncertain about the frequency of cleaning or treatment.

What if multiple ear treatments have been dispensed?

It is likely that an ear cleaner has been prescribed alongside an ear medication. This is to ensure that the ear is as clean as possible for the medication to have maximum effect. There should be at least 20 minutes between the application of a cleaner and the administration of the medication to ensure that the cleaner does not dilute the treatment.

What should I do if I miss a dose?

If a dose is missed, give the medication as soon as possible. However, it is best to skip the missed dose if it is almost time for your pet's next scheduled dose. **DO NOT** give a double dose to make up for the missed dose and do not exceed the stated dose in any one 24-hour period.

What should I do if my pet is accidentally given too many doses?

Contact your vet immediately if your pet is given an overdose of topical ear treatment. However, a single extra dose is unlikely to cause significant problems.

Can my pet receive topical ear treatments if I am already giving them other drugs?

Tell your vet if you are giving your pet any other medications, even if you think they already know. This includes herbal or off-the-shelf remedies from a pet shop, pharmacy or health store.

What are the possible side effects of topical ear treatments for my pet?

If your pet develops any unusual symptoms (e.g. sickness, diarrhoea, unsteadiness on their feet) whilst taking the medication, please contact your vet. Although it is rare, some ear treatments can cause irritation in the ear. Any side effects depend on the dose, the length of treatment and the individual.

Whom do I contact if I want to know more?

If you have any questions about an ear treatment, or concerns about your pet's health, contact your own vet. They will know your pet's medical history and will know about the specific medicine.