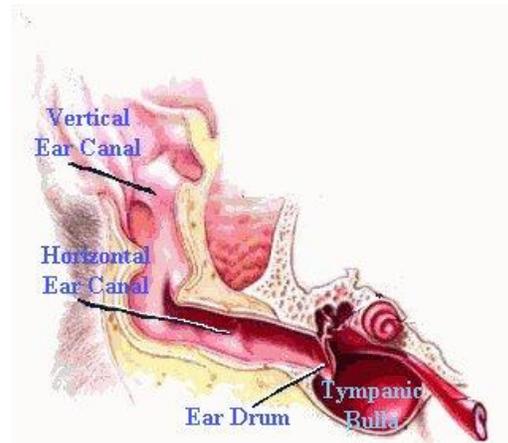


Dr. Craig's Gentle Ear Cleaning Method

A dog or cat's external ear canal is "L" shaped. The 'vertical ear canal' connects with the outside of the ear; the long 'horizontal ear canal' lies deeper in the canal and terminates at the eardrum. For comparison purposes, humans only have a short horizontal ear canal and do not have a vertical canal.

If your pet needs to have their ears cleaned AND needs ear medicine, Dr. Craig urges you to clean the ears at least thirty to forty-five minutes before applying any medication to them. By cleaning the ear canals first, you will remove much of the debris and allow better, more effective contact, between the ear canal skin and the medication you will be applying. Dr. Craig recommends cleaning the ear by the following steps:



- 1) First and foremost, do not cause pain. If your pet experiences pain during ear cleaning he/she will learn to avoid the procedure. If this happens, please let us know. Also, make sure the ear cleaning solution is at room temperature when using.



Client putting cotton ball into ear canal entrance. Remember, the cotton is only to absorb ear cleaner that is in the canal and the cotton is NOT to be used to wipe debris away.

- 2) Try to do this outdoors if you can or in an area that can be cleaned easily. Your pet will most likely shake his/her head during this process and ear wash fluid and ear canal debris may be released from the ear.
- 3) Gently pull the ear flap straight up and hold it with one hand as shown in the photograph.
- 4) Fill the entire canal with the solution. You may use a cotton ball (real cotton, not synthetic cotton) to transfer the cleaning solution or, if you are careful not to get the bottle tip dirty, simply pour the cleaner into the vertical ear canal. Completely fill the ear canals with the cleaner.

- 5) Place a cotton ball in the opening of the ear canal just to help absorb cleaner. **DO NOT RUB COTTON INTO THE SKIN** because physical action of cotton rubbed on sore skin can be irritating and can cause skin ulcers. It is tempting to rub the cotton ball into the ear, again, do NOT do this.

- 6) Gently manually massage the ear canal using an upward motion to help pull the solution up into the cotton ball. This creates turbulence within the ear canals, loosening up the debris. Remember you are using the cotton as an absorbent, not to mechanically wipe away any debris.

- 7) Remove the cotton ball and repeat the process until the solution absorbed by the cotton ball is clean.

- 8) Consider offering your pet treats during the cleaning procedure so that he/she associates the procedure with something positive or fun.
- 9) Note, this cleaning technique is very gentle because no wiping of the ear canal skin is involved. It relies on turbulence to remove the debris. Because it is gentle, you will not see all of the debris removed the first day. It will take several consecutive days of ear cleaning before the debris is removed. The advantage to this procedure is that it avoids packing the ear canals with debris thus avoiding a ruptured ear drum and it avoids owner created skin ulcers or erosions in the ears.



Photo showing a client massaging the ear canal.