



EAR HEMATOMA

ABOUT THE DISEASE

An **ear hematoma** is a painful, blood-filled swelling of the ear flap (pinna) which occurs secondary to an underlying ear problem. Proper diagnosis and treatment of the underlying problem is necessary to prevent reoccurrence.

Both canine and feline patients can develop **ear hematomas**, although they are more common in canine patients. This condition often leads to permanent ear deformation.

OBTAINING A DIAGNOSIS

Diagnosis is usually made by sight during a veterinary examination. The presence of blood can be confirmed with a simple syringe draw from the ear.

Diagnosis should also include determining underlying ear disease (ear infection, ear mites, allergies, etc.).

TREATMENT

There are several different treatment options which depend upon on how quickly the **ear hematoma** develops, when it is identified, and the personal preferences of the veterinarian.

The simplest technique, often seen with mixed results, is to drain the fluid from the ear pinna and then infuse a corticosteroid. One concern with this technique is that fluid can reaccumulate within a matter of hours to days.

A slightly more cumbersome technique includes placement of a catheter or cannula into the ear pinna to allow drainage into a collection system. This is most difficult as patients will shake their heads and potentially dislodge drainage hardware.

The most widely used technique in recurrent cases includes cutting the skin on the ear at the base to allow drainage of fluid. With this procedure, the stretched skin is also sutured back onto the ear cartilage. This is most efficient for a cosmetic repair, but carries the highest risk of incision complications, infection, and requirements for wound care.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- Have the patient evaluated as soon as possible when headshaking or ear scratching behavior begins.
- There is no one way to effectively manage **ear hematomas**, as each option has its benefits and drawbacks.