

HEALTH TOPICS

EARS

The French Bulldogs' ears are what set them apart from other breeds of dog and is usually what attracts people to the breed. So what do we do to keep them looking their best? Read on...

Ear Hygiene

1. Check the ears at least once every two weeks, bath time is great as you have a 'captive audience'
2. Clean out only as necessary. If you clean them too often you cause the ear to produce too much wax or dry the ear out too much.
3. When there is an infection see your vet immediately. Infection can be recognised by smell, hanging of the head to one side, pain when handled near the ears or incessant scratching of the ear.
4. When cleaning the ears squeeze a small amount of "Epi-otic" (available from City Farmers or vets) into the ear canal and massage the base of the ear and behind the opening. Wrap a piece of cotton wool around your little finger and use it like a big cotton bud.
5. If your dog goes to the beach or lake regularly use a drop or two of "Aqua Ear" if they get water in their ears.

Ear Problems

Infections and Grass Seeds

The first signs of ear infection is apparent when the dog is seen constantly shaking its head, holding its head to one side, scratching the ears or ears and especially with the Frenchies one of the ears may hang slightly to one side. The inside of the ear may be red and inflamed and there may also be a heavy waxy or slimy discharge. There is often an offensive smell. If there is no discharge but a sudden appearance of symptoms then there is a likelihood of a foreign object such as a grass seed in the ear. With either condition visit your vet IMMEDIATELY. Grass seeds will lodge into the skin almost straight away and will continue to bury themselves causing major damage. If ear infections are not treated it can lead to deafness and major operations, not to mention the fact that your dog is in constant pain.

Ear Mites

Ear mites are mildly contagious for dogs. The ear mites cause irritation of the ears and the presence of a reddish granular wax. The important point to remember with ear mites is that they have a life cycle so it is important to treat the ears as prescribed by your vet and then have your vet re-check several weeks after starting treatment to make sure that the infestation has been cleared up completely.

Haematomas

An ear haematoma can be identified by the ear looking like a stuffed sausage, which is actually blood. It is caused by the rupture of blood vessels in the ears which are particularly delicate in the ear. It can be caused by vigorous head shaking, such as when an infection is present, trauma such as puppies biting on ears or fights or grass seeds. Treatment by your vet will be surgical ie your dog will be anaesthetised to have the blood drained. When ear haematomas occur in Frenchies it is highly likely that the ear will NOT stand up again as the scar tissue will weigh the ear down.

Fly Bites

Biting flies can cause considerable damage to the tips of Frenchies ears. A crusting of dried blood is found on the tops of the ears. If this is neglected by the owner it can eventually cause severe damage to the circulation to the tips of the ears, where the tips may become thickened, curled and actual tissue may be lost. Badly affected ears may end up losing up to a third of their original length. Some dogs are more prone to biting flies than others and the bites are particularly painful. Treatment involves removing the dried blood to stop attracting the flies and applying insect repellent.

Source: The New Dog Owner's Manual, Dr Karen Hedberg.