



Ears, Paws and Rears

Ear infections

Repeat ear infections are more likely in dogs with **pendulous ears** as the aeration of the ear is reduced therefore bacteria are more likely to thrive. Dogs that enjoy **swimming** are more prone as the water can contain bugs that can start an infection. These dogs may benefit from using a regular ear cleaner to help promote an optimal ear environment and prevent infection occurring. Ear infections can be due to **parasites** such as mites; using Advocate every month can prevent against these.



Does your dog get repeat ear infections?

Does your dog chew or lick at their feet?

Does your dog rub their back end on the ground?

Chewing/Licking feet

Dogs can lick at their feet due to **infection** with bacteria, fungus or parasites. Particularly during summer months dogs can get '**foreign bodies**' such as grass seeds in their feet which can cause irritation. Dogs can also lick their feet due to muscle or bone **pain** in that area. Licking can also be a **behavioural** problem.



Itchy back end

Dogs can rub their back end along the ground if they have problems with their **anal glands**. These glands are found inside the anus and can get full or impacted due to a bout of diarrhoea or inflammation of the sac itself. Rubbing of the back end can also occur due to a general itching problem.



If your dog gets recurrence of any or a combination of these problems there may be an underlying reason. Some common underlying problems are:

Endocrine conditions – this is the imbalance of active substances in the body
Allergic – allergies to food, the environment or infectious agents - more common in Westies, Terriers or Labradors.



Diagnosis of underlying problems

Endocrine

Abnormalities of the level of active substances within the body can be diagnosed with a blood test.

Allergies

When allergies are suspected from the signs your dog is showing it is important to treat any parasites such as mites (mange) or any infections first. A hypoallergenic diet trial will determine if the condition is related to the diet.

Blood test

A blood test can be taken to test your dog's unique reaction to common environmental agents such as pollens, grass and dust mites. The blood test is sent to an external lab which provides an individual immunotherapy 'vaccination' for your dog.

Skin testing

This is similar to the blood test but the agents are injected into the skin to see your dog's reaction to them rather than from the blood. This is usually done at a referral practice.

If there is an underlying problem which is not treated your dog may get repeat infections or itching. Medications such as antibiotics, shampoos and steroids can help manage the secondary problems.



If a diagnosis of an underlying problem is made then treatment specific to that condition can be started. This may involve tablets to correct any imbalances your dog has.

If there is an allergic underlying problem, treatment can involve:

Avoiding agents – this is usually difficult, especially if pollens cause the problem but boil-washing bedding and regular vacuuming can help reduce house dust mites.

Immunotherapy – this helps to normalise your dogs reaction to agents it is allergic to.

Steroids – help to reduce the body's reaction to allergic agents. They are best used for seasonal problems as long term use has side effects.

Ciclosporin – reduces the body's reaction to allergic agents and can be given long term.

Anti-histamines – these are used in combination with other treatments as they are not usually effective on their own.

Essential Fatty Acids – help improve skin and coat health.

