

## Ear Mites

**Find out what a vet recommends for treating ear mites.**

*Elaine Wexler-Mitchell, D.V.M.*

Q. Does ear scratching mean mites?

Elaine Wexler-Mitchell, D.V.M., says: Ear mites are a problem in kittens and in adult cats who venture outdoors. Ear mites are microscopic bugs that live in ear canals and eat earwax and skin oils, which can cause itchiness, inflammation, and a buildup of waxy debris. Mites live for short periods of time off an animal in the ear environment, but are generally transmitted when one cat (or dog) with ear mites comes in physical contact (crawling, falling over, rubbing) with another cat. Your veterinarian can easily identify mites either by otoscopic examination of the ears or by microscopic examination of ear swabs. These tests verify the presence of live mites and/or eggs.

If ear mites are definitively diagnosed, they can be eliminated as long as there is no additional exposure to the bugs; therefore, all dogs and cats in the household need to be treated at the same time. There are many effective treatments for mites, including medicated eardrops, internal treatment with ivermectin, and topical treatment with selamectin (Revolution). Recurrent ear problems in indoor cats are more likely due to yeast infections or allergies-problems arising from environmental conditions and individual sensitivities. Ear mites are not transmissible to humans.

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