

Aural Hematoma in Dogs

Overview and Risk

Aural means “ear” and a hematoma is “a space abnormally filled with blood,” so an “aural hematoma” is a blood-filled pouch in the ear flap. Aural hematomas are much more common in dogs than in cats. A hematoma in the ear is usually the result of damage to the ear flap, frequently caused by an injury or excessive scratching or head shaking. When itchiness is the underlying clinical sign, conditions such as ear [mites](#), allergies, [ear infections](#), or debris in the ear may be the source.

Signs

Aural hematomas are pretty hard to miss. Your dog’s external ear (the pinna) will look very swollen and will often be painful and feel warm to the touch.

Test/Treat

If you suspect your dog has a hematoma, you should contact your veterinarian right away. It will be important to identify what caused the hematoma and treat its underlying origin, as well as to remove the fluid in the ear flap.

Your veterinarian will often recommend surgery as a definitive solution to open and drain the hematoma. All the fluid and any other nasty debris within the hematoma will be removed, and your veterinarian will repair the ear flap so that it can’t fill up with fluid again.

If your pet must undergo [anesthesia](#) to have the hematoma drained and repaired, your veterinarian may also recommend preanesthetic tests to ensure your dog is healthy and can tolerate the anesthetic procedure without any trouble.

These may include:

- Chemistry tests to evaluate kidney, liver and pancreatic function as well as blood sugar levels
- A complete blood count to rule out blood-related conditions
- Electrolyte tests to ensure your dog isn’t dehydrated or suffering from an electrolyte imbalance

Your dog may go home on antibiotics and treatment for the underlying cause, if necessary, as well as pain-relieving medications. Additional medication may be

prescribed depending on your pet’s particular situation. Many dogs must wear a cone-shaped collar, called an “Elizabethan collar,” to prevent them from scratching the surgery site.

Prevention

Some hematomas cannot be prevented, as they occur spontaneously. Many, however, occur secondarily to things like [ear mites](#), [fleas](#), and [ear infections](#). Checking your favorite dog’s ears regularly and making sure they are clean and disease-free is imperative. If you suspect something is out of the ordinary, contact your veterinarian to discuss the issue.

If you have any questions or concerns, you should always visit or call your veterinarian – they are your best resource to ensure the health and well-being of your pets.