

Ear Mites in Dogs

Leslie Sinclair, DVM explains how to identify and treat ear mites on your dog.

Leslie Sinclair, DVM

Q. Does my dog have ear mites?

Leslie Sinclair, DVM says: The round, eight-legged mites most of us call ear mites are formally known as *Otodectes cyanotis*. A dog becomes infested with them when he comes into contact with another infested dog or an area in which an infested dog has shed some of the mites, such as a bed. Some dogs seem unaffected by ear mites, but others find them painful and scratch at their ears until they create open sores. Dogs with ear mites usually have dark brown or black debris that looks like coffee grounds in their ears. Sometimes the mites are large enough to see with the naked eye or a magnifying glass. Your veterinarian will remove some of the debris with a cotton swab and place it in a drop of mineral oil for microscopic examination. Finding mites in ear debris confirms their presence, but just because they aren't easily found doesn't mean they're not there, and your veterinarian may still recommend treatment based on your dog's symptoms.

Ear mites don't infest people, but they do infest other dogs and cats in a household, as well as carpets and bedding. If your dog has ear mites, treating the other animals in your home is a good idea. Wash blankets and bedding with soap and hot water, and treat the environment with any product that is labeled for use against fleas.

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