

## Aural Hematomas

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Reese is a handsome 10 year old male Labrador retriever that presented to the Route 516 Animal Hospital for evaluation of his left ear. The owners had noticed that part of his ear appeared swollen and he was shaking his head back and forth. Upon examination, Reese was diagnosed with an aural hematoma and an underlying ear infection in that ear.



An aural hematoma is a collection of blood within the cartilage of the ear. This is also commonly known as “cauliflower ear” or “wrestler’s ear” and is a condition that occurs in people secondary to blunt trauma to the ear. In our cats and dogs, this issue is most often caused by self trauma to the ear. There is usually an underlying ear infection that causes the pet to scratch their ear or shake their head vigorously. This condition usually presents with a large or small swelling on the inner concave surface of the ear. Besides a routine physical examination, microscopic examination of the debris within the ear canal is important to look for a bacterial, yeast or a parasitic infection. A culture of the ear may also be recommended if there is a significant amount of bacterial overgrowth to ensure that the right antibiotic is chosen to treat the infection. Treatment of aural hematomas is typically surgical. It is one of the most common surgical procedures



[https://www.medicinenet.com/cauliflower\\_ear/article.htm](https://www.medicinenet.com/cauliflower_ear/article.htm)

done in small animal practices. As shown in the picture below, an S-shaped incision is made on the inner aspect of the ear so that the contents can be drained completely. Sutures are then placed parallel to the incision so that the skin lays flat and adhesions have time to develop between the layers of the ear. These sutures will need to stay in place for about 2-3 weeks. Another treatment option includes draining the hematoma with a needle but this is usually ineffective long term as the hematoma tends to recur. The insertion of a temporary cannula (small tube for drainage) can be another option that will allow scar tissue to form. Laser therapy is a newer



*Aural hematoma in a dog before surgery.*



*Post-operative picture*

therapy being used after drainage of the ear to help relieve inflammation, swelling and promote healing. Bandaging of the ear is usually recommended to prevent further damage to the ear after drainage or surgery.

Update on Reese: We have drained Reese's ear and he is using a special bandage to help prevent further damage. If his hematoma recurs, we will consider surgery for him.

