

Why do cytology? Lifelong Ear Partnership



There are so many ways in which this technique can be of benefit.

Cytology:

- Increases your chance of reaching a more specific diagnosis
- Helps you prescribe a more targeted treatment
- Ensures prudent use of antimicrobials by reducing the tendency to dispense empirical therapy
- Helps you to monitor response to therapy
- Improves your ability to give clients pointers on prognosis
- Provides tangible and visual findings to present to owners, increasing understanding and communication
- Allows better clinical outcomes, creating better client satisfaction

All with a technique that is quick, inexpensive, and easily undertaken within your clinic

Meet and greet

Not only do veterinary staff need to be skilled communicators, but as veterinary professionals, we are also often faced with patients who are fearful of us. In one study, over three-quarters of dogs presenting within a veterinary clinic, demonstrated fearful behaviours (Döring *et al*, 2009). A combination of current otic pain (otalgia) and previous stressful experiences, as a result of examination and/or an unfamiliar environment, can lead to the expression of fear-related behaviour and lack of compliance.

It is important that we recognise and address such behaviour as soon as possible.

1. Greet your patient to create a nice experience. Remember the dog will need to have its ears handled on multiple occasions
2. After your initial clinical examination, put your examination gloves on (if you haven't already) and approach the ear in a careful but still decisive way to explore the level of otalgia. Collecting material on your gloved finger might be your best chance of getting a "rescue cytology sample" if all else fails. The dog might need sedation, general anaesthesia, and/or anti-inflammatory treatment to reduce swelling and/or to provide analgesia before being properly investigated
3. Start building the Lifelong Ear Partnership teamwork you need and gain owner commitment, by advising them to watch the animated video that describes why you want to perform cytology

Reference: Döring *et al* (2009) Fear-related behaviour of dogs in veterinary practice. *The Veterinary Journal* 182; 38-43



So, next time your vet wants to do cytology, how will you respond?



scan me

Collect your sample

Pick a sampling technique that you prefer, using a cotton bud, gloved finger, or cytology brush. Practice makes perfect, and don't forget to always sample both ears for reference.

Top Tips:

- Practice your sampling skills on healthy dogs you come across. This way you will improve your technique and you will get a good perspective on how cytology looks from an asymptomatic/normal dog ear
- Mark your slides with a pencil and use the same slide for both ears
- Roll, don't smear or rub your sample onto your slides, as this might destroy cell morphology
- If otic parasites are suspected, remember to collect slides for microscopy on low magnification without staining
- If you have a clinical suspicion of treatment failure or a more complicated opportunistic infection, collect samples for culture and susceptibility testing at the same time



Establish teamwork



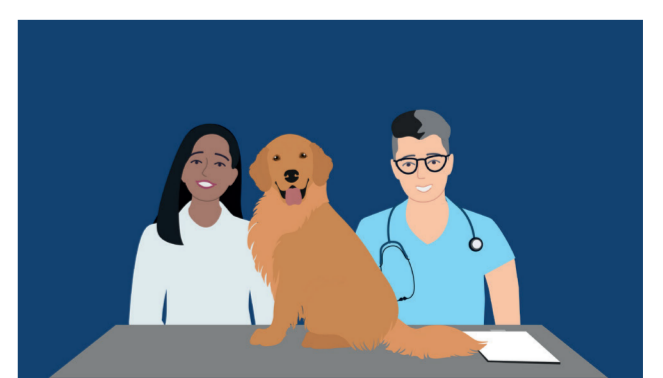
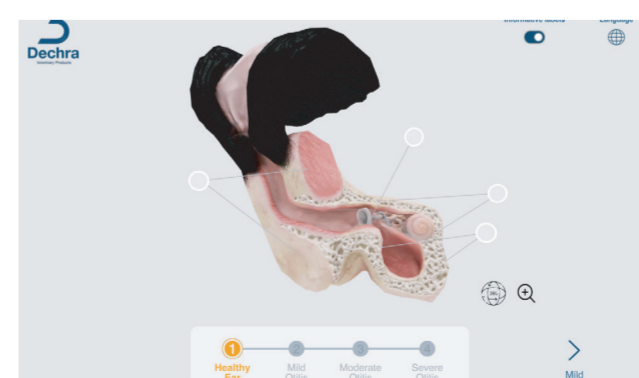
After you have recorded all findings in the patient record, it is time to explain to the owner what is discovered and what needs to be undertaken. Remember you are the coach of the much-needed teamwork, to reach the successful case outcome you all want.

You should communicate your cytological findings and the treatment plan with the owner at this stage. **The 4D ear model can assist you** to visually describe the resulting changes within the ear canal.

This is also the suggested time to discuss the primary cause of the condition, what needs further investigation, and the importance of revisits and a long-term plan. The designated website for owners and/or the animated videos that refer to these topics are advised at this stage.

Top Tips:

At the revisit, it might be appropriate to introduce a long-term ear-diary for owners to monitor their dog's ear disease. These are available by visiting ear-inflammation.com or speaking to your Dechra distribution representative



We're all ears.