

VIDEO-OTOSCOPY

Ear infections are one of the most common reasons dogs require veterinary care. Despite their commonness, these infections can become quite complicated, and some dogs can develop chronic, ongoing infections that do not resolve despite repeated, diligent treatment attempts. Sometimes, these dogs suffer from such severe, constant infection that they end up needing invasive ear surgery.

Many external ear infections fail to respond to treatment because the infection itself has damaged the ear in ways that allow the infectious organisms to hide, survive, and then re-infect the ear. Examples include an external ear infection spreading behind the eardrum to involve the middle ear, or external ear infections causing the tissue of the ear canal to thicken, creating folds and pockets in which bacteria can “hide” and avoid topical ear medication.

At CUVS, we offer advanced video-otoscopy to identify and address these common causes of recurrent, relapsing ear infections. A video-otoscope is a high-powered, fiber-optic camera, enabling in-depth visualization of the vertical and horizontal ear canals and eardrum. The otoscope is attached to a port that enables thorough flushing and suction of the ear canal, facilitating the removal of bacteria and debris that other ear cleaning cannot.

Furthermore, the video-otoscope allows for excellent visualization of the ear drum, so that ruptures can be detected. If there is suspicion for a middle ear disease, with an intact eardrum, the video-otoscope enables myringotomy, a very small incision in the ear drum to take sterile samples of the middle ear, as well as careful flushing and debris removal from the middle ear.

In summary, video-otoscopy provides us a powerful yet minimally invasive approach to chronic ear diseases that might otherwise end up requiring surgical intervention.