



### **What pets may benefit from total ear canal ablation?**

Dogs and cats with chronic ear problems can often be helped with surgery. When ear canals have been infected or inflamed for long periods of time, the ear canal becomes narrow. Cleaning and medicating the ear becomes more difficult, painful, and often ineffectual. Though it sounds radical, removal of the ear canal can eliminate a chronic source of pain for affected pets, and the need to medicate constantly is eliminated.

### **What care is required after surgery?**

Pets are usually hospitalized overnight for pain medication and observation. Once at home, pets must be kept quiet for two weeks. An Elizabethan collar will be necessary to protect the surgical incision and any drains that are in place. Prior to discharge, pets are assessed for the ability to blink appropriately. Sometimes the nerve that controls blinking is stretched during surgery, and the cornea must be lubricated topically until the blink reflex returns. Antibiotics are generally given for several weeks postoperatively to clear any deep infection.

### **What is the prognosis for my pet after surgery?**

Total ear canal ablation carries a good prognosis. Ears that have been painful for months to years are no longer an issue. The ear flap (pinna) is not removed with the surgery, so pets look very similar pre- and postoperatively. Some degree of hearing loss does occur with surgery, but the majority of these pets do not hear normally preoperatively due to ear canal narrowing and fluid/debris accumulation.



Left: Before surgery appearance of a dog with chronic ear disease.  
Right: After surgery appearance of a dog with total ear canal ablation.