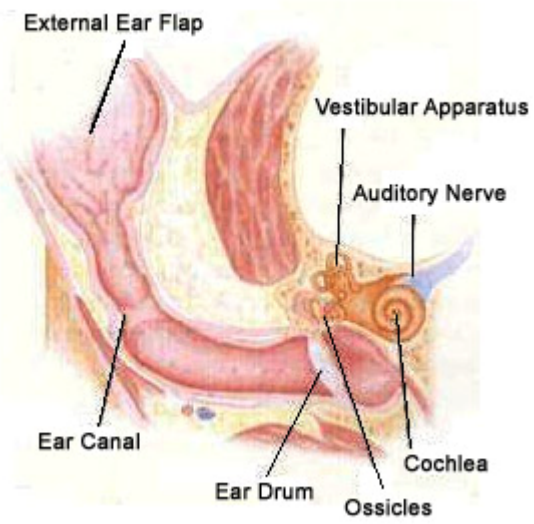
THE EAR



External Ear Flap – The visible part of the ear that resides outside of the head. Also called the "pinna".

Ear Canal – A tube running from the outer ear to the middle ear.

Ear Drum – A thin membrane that separates the external ear from the middle ear. Its function is to transmit sound from the air to the ossicles inside the middle ear.

Ossicles – Contained within the middle ear space and serve to transmit sounds from the air to the fluid-filled cochlea. The term "ossicles" literally means "tiny bones".

Cochlea – The auditory portion of the inner ear. Its core component is the Organ of Corti, the sensory organ of hearing, which is distributed along the partition separating fluid chambers in the coiled tapered tube of the cochlea.

Auditory Nerve – A nerve in the ear that carries nerve impulses to the brain. The cochlear nerve arises from within the cochlea and extends to the brainstem.

Vestibular Apparatus – Contributes to our balance and our sense of spatial orientation and is the sensory system that provides the dominant input about movement and sense of balance.

The Otic Exam – What are we doing?

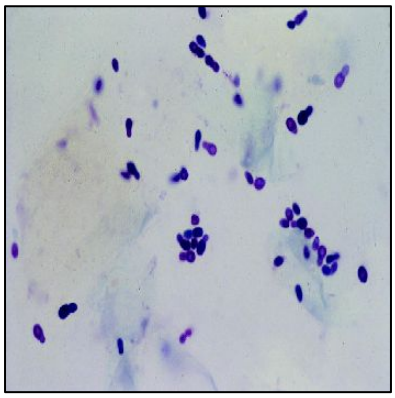
- *Physical exam* – The doctor is able to assess the general condition of the ear by observing the physical characteristics of the ear and noting any changes. The otiscope allows the doctor to visualize the inner structures of the ear, including the ear canal and the ear drum. It is vital for the doctor to examine your pet to determine if the ear drum is intact before prescribing medication, as some ear medications are toxic to the middle/inner ear.

Diagnostic test:

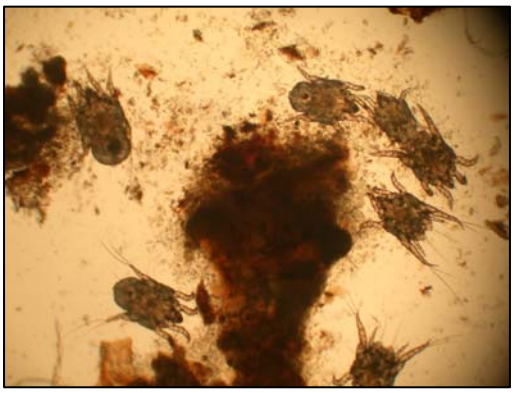
- *Ear Swabs* – A cotton-tipped swab is rubbed along the inside of the ear canal to collect our sample. The sample is then rolled onto a slide and stained. The slide is viewed under the microscope to evaluate.

Ear swab findings:

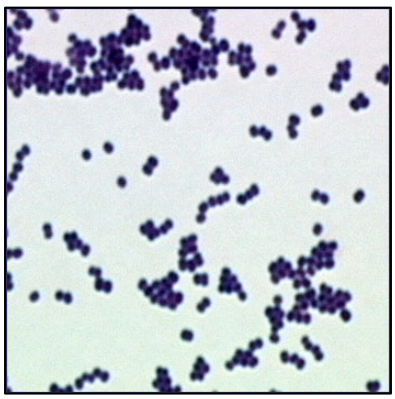
* *Yeast* (below)



* *Ear Mites* (below)



* *Cocci bacteria* (below)



* *Rod bacteria* (below)