

for ear maintenance. It is best to avoid using a cotton swab, such as Q-Tips. Using a Q-Tip can actually push any wax and/or debris back down to the eardrum.

- When you bathe your Golden Retriever, place a cotton ball in each ear to avoid water getting into the ear canal. If you swim your Golden Retriever on a regular basis, you may also want use a "drying agent".
- Lift your dog's earflaps on a regular basis and "take a sniff". If there is trouble brewing, you will see the start of the brownish discharge and your nose should let you know also that something is starting!

Now, should you lift your Golden Retriever's earflap and see "red"...and smell toxic fumes, the first thing you need to do is call the vet and make an appointment!

- Make sure you use up the entire prescription of drops or ointment that the veterinarian prescribes! Just because the ear starts to look better in a day or two, don't be fooled! If you do not finish the medication, as prescribed, the infection will return! Also, if there is no improvement in a day or two, call your vet!!

After that, and for a period of time until the dog's ears are 100% healthy again you should:

- Keep the ears free of excess hair (scissor it out). Hair can trap dirt and wax and overall just be a nasty place for bacteria to breed!
- Make sure you continue to lift those "flaps" and take a "sniff" on a regular (daily) basis!
- Make sure you use the cotton balls when bathing and use a drying agent if you have regularly swim your Golden Retriever.

While I strongly recommend consulting your veterinarian for a diagnosis before attempting any "home remedies", for the occasional "outer ear" yeast-type infections, I have used the following with good results:

- One part Isopropyl alcohol and 2 parts white vinegar. Put in a needle-less syringe, squirt in the ear, massage the ear canal and wipe out. Best done outside or in a shower, the shake response is immediate! DO NOT use this preparation if the ears are highly inflamed, as it may sting! This solution is better used for an occasional ear cleansing of a healthy ear.
- To soothe irritated ears before you are able to get your dog to the vet, brew CHAMOMILE TEA and allow it to set out to room temperature. Put 15 drops in each ear, gently massage and then allow dog to shake remaining tea out. If really severe, add a little VITAMIN E to mixture as well. VITAMIN E promotes healing. Use a cotton ball to dry the ear.
- Olive Oil is also a nice ear bath. Warm it and then allow it to reach a soothing temperature. Again, put about 15 drops in each ear, gently massage and allow dog to shake. Use a cotton ball to dry the ear.
- Slightly diluted Hydrogen Peroxide will also loosen earwax.

Two good "commercial" products that I have used over the years are Bio-Grooms "Ear Care-Ear Cleaner" and "Wonder Ear" powder, which is manufactured by Chantilly Kennels.

The final flip-flap on "ears" is regular at-home maintenance can avoid problems and the sooner a problem is identified, diagnosed and treated, the sooner your dog will be back to his happy Golden Retriever "life is a party" self again!

Until next time, remember.... ***"The great thing about a dog is that you can make a fool of yourself in front of him and not only will he not scold you, but he will frequently make a fool of himself, too."*** – Unknown

The above information is based on my personal research and first hand experience with my Golden