

Pacific Tide

An informational newsletter

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About our Author

Katherine Doerr, DVM, DACVD

Dr. Katherine Doerr received her Doctorate in Veterinary Medicine from University of Florida, followed by an internship at the Matthew J. Ryan Veterinary Hospital at the University of Pennsylvania. She completed her dermatology residency at UC Davis and joined Pacific Veterinary Specialists in August 2013. Dr. Doerr's special interests include clinical allergy management, cutaneous manifestations of systemic diseases, and autoimmune/immune-mediated dermatoses. She is available by appointment in both Capitola Wednesday through Friday and in Monterey on Tuesdays. In her free time she enjoys the outdoors with her black Labrador, "Toby," and has a special interest in anything involving a wet-suit and the ocean. She also enjoys traveling and camping with her family, cycling, hiking, fishing, and running distance.



**Katherine Doerr,
DVM, DACVD**

Otitis Media

Otitis media is infection/inflammation of the middle ear that can affect 52-82 % of dogs with chronic otitis externa and 16% of dogs with acute onset otitis externa. The middle ear includes the tympanic membrane, tympanic cavity, and the auditory ossicles. The most common cause is extension of otitis externa through the tympanic membrane. Rarely, it may occur primarily with no evidence of otitis externa. A mass (polyp, neoplasia, foreign body) or primary secretory otitis media (PSOM) may also be a primary cause of otitis media. Patients with primary otitis media may also present with respiratory or neurologic abnormalities or problems with hearing.

Diagnosis of otitis media is based on physical exam findings, cytology, and imaging. Physical examination findings may be vague or may include the following: ipsilateral head tilt, facial nerve paralysis, ipsilateral drooping of the pinnae, scratching at the pinnae or neck, head shaking. Common cytological findings of bacterial otitis media include evidence of bacteria (cocci, rods) and rarely yeast (*Malassezia* spp.), inflammatory cells, and keratinous debris. Bacterial culture and sensitivity is beneficial in determining genus and species of bacteria that may be involved, as well as antibiotic choice for therapy. *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* positive patients have a higher chance of having a compromised tympanic membrane. Culture and sensitivity of the middle ear cavity versus the external ear canal differs about 89.5% of the time, necessitating separate culture samples of the middle ear cavity and external ear canal. A CT scan or MRI is beneficial in evaluation of all patients with suspect otitis media as it can determine the presence/absence of a mass in the middle ear and may rule out cerebral/brainstem disease in cases presenting with additional neurologic defects (i.e. caudal occipital malformation syndrome in Cavalier King Charles).

Treatment of otitis media involves a myringotomy and subsequent deep ear cleaning. These procedures are both diagnostic, due to ability to acquire a middle ear cytology and culture, and therapeutic, as the clumped debris is removed to allow better penetration of medications. Video otoscopy is of paramount importance in correctly and safely performing this procedure on dogs and cats in order to ensure proper location for puncture. Based upon culture and sensitivity results, antibiotics should be administered topically and orally/parenterally for a minimum of 6 weeks. Routine flushing with TrizEDTA or another rinse that is safe for the middle ear should be implemented as well.

It is important to adequately diagnose and treat any patient with suspect otitis media in order to prevent any chronic changes to the external ear canal or to the tympanic bullae. Clients should understand that imaging as well as a deep ear flush is important to gather diagnostic information as well as being therapeutic for the patient. Furthermore, appropriate therapy for the primary or underlying cause is essential for successful management of otitis media.

Our Doctors

Internal Medicine

Kelly Akol, DVM, DACVIM (SAIM)
Merrienne Burtch, DVM, DACVIM(SAIM)
Michelle Pressel, DVM, DACVIM (SAIM)

Surgery

Lisa Metelman, MS, DVM, DACVS
Tom LaHue, DVM, DACVS
Dean Filipowicz, MS, DVM, DACVS

Oncology

Theresa Arteaga, DVM, DACVIM(Oncology)

Critical Care

Colleen Brady, DVM, DACVECC
Lillian Good, DVM, DACVECC

Cardiology

Mandi Kleman, DVM, DACVIM(Cardiology)

Dermatology

Katherine Doerr, DVM, DACVD

Radiology (VRS)

Larry Kerr, DVM, DACVR
Mark Lee, DVM, DACVR

Emergency

Christian Robison, DVM
Kim Delkener, DVM
Mark Saphir, DVM
Jessica Kurek, DVM

Behavior

Jan Brennan, DVM (practice limited to behavior)

About Our Hospitals

Pacific Veterinary Specialists was founded to provide high quality, specialized medical care to companion animal patients. Our practice is dedicated to serving the veterinary community as a partner in total patient care. We offer comprehensive specialized services including endoscopy, Doppler ultrasound, surgery, 24-hour ICU care, and emergency and critical care. Our staff is committed to providing compassionate and thorough medical care that meets the needs of the patient, client, and referring veterinarian. In September 2011 we opened PVSM and offer internal medicine, oncology, dermatology and cardiology Tuesday through Thursday in Monterey. Behavior consultations by appointment are available on Mondays.

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