

Ears

Your **BRTs** ears should be clean, slightly pink-gray and have no odor. Problems with the ear to watch for include:

- Red, irritated skin
- Dirt or wax build up
- "Coffee grounds" (rare)
- Discharge
- Foul odor
- Frequent head shaking, or scratching/pawing at ear(s).

Some **BRTs** have a lot of hair in their ears and it needs to be removed frequently to prevent infections. When you have your dog groomed be sure to ask the groomer to do this. Some groomers do forget.

The most common problems with ears are ear infections (yeast or bacterial). Ear mites are actually pretty uncommon in dogs. In any case, any of the above symptoms are grounds for having the vet check your dog's ears out.

Ear mites are treated with medication. Sometimes a reapplication is needed. Some people have gotten rid of light infestations by cleaning the ear out and then coating lightly with baby oil or mineral oil.

Ear infections are a little harder to treat, usually requiring daily ear drops for a week or so, weekly drops for some time after that. Some dogs prone to ear infections need to have ear drops on a regular basis. **Drop-eared dogs are a bit more prone to ear infections, as prick ears normally allow more air circulation.**

An easy home remedy to *prevent* ear infections (will not cure an existing one) is:

2 Tablespoons Boric Acid

4 oz Rubbing Alcohol

1 Tablespoon Glycerin

Shake well. Put 1 small eyedropper full in each ear. Rub it around first, and then let the dog shake. Do this once a week and you shouldn't see any ear infections. It works by raising the pH level slightly inside the ear, making it less hospitable to bacteria.

To clean out an ear that's simply dirty (some buildup of dirt and wax is normal, but excessive ear wax may indicate that something else is wrong), take a cotton ball, dip in hydrogen peroxide if you like (squeeze excess out) and wipe the dog's ear out. The canal is rather deep, so you will not injure your dog so long as you only use your finger to probe the canal. Clean all around the little crevices as best as you can. Use another cotton ball for the other ear. Be sure to dry the ears out thoroughly.

Trimming Nails

Your **BRT** will need to have nails trimmed. While the vet will often clip them for you, many dogs need their nails trimmed more often than that to prevent injuries and other problems associated with overgrown nails.

Clipping

Use nail clippers available at pet stores. Look for the guillotine type (don't use the human variety, this will crush and injure your dog's nail) and get blade replacements as the sharper the blade is the easier this procedure is. There is another kind that looks like scissors with hooked tips that are also good, and may be easier to handle (however, the blades cannot be replaced on this type).

Before cutting the nails, examine them carefully. The nails of the **Black Russian Terrier** are black it will be hard to tell where the quick is, so you must take care not to cut into the quick.

If your dog resists having its nails trimmed, try trimming them while you sit on a couch with the dog on its back in your lap. By putting the dog on its back, you make the nails accessible and put the dog in a submissive position where they are less apt to fight. As with many things, this is easiest if you start while your dog is still a pup.

If the cutter is sharp, the nails won't crack if you cut at right angles to the nail. that is, hold it so that the blades are on the top and bottom of the nail, not to the sides of the nail.

Do not cut below the quick. It will be painful to your dog and bleed everywhere. When in doubt, trim less of the nail. It will just mean trimming more often. Clip the portion above the quick for each. Keep a styptic pencil on hand to staunch any blood flow. Flour or cornstarch will help in a pinch.

Elbow calluses

Elbow calluses are common in dogs. Large breeds seem to be more susceptible to this problem. They are thought to be the result of pressure when the dog lies on a hard surface. Mild calluses are usually not harmful. If the callus is large or becomes infected, veterinary treatment is usually necessary. The best prevention is providing soft bedding or padding for the dog's resting place, provided the dog is not inclined to chew and swallow bedding material. Choose material that can be replaced or washed frequently for sanitary purposes. Try to prevent your pup from getting these in the first place. If they do get them, you can apply Bag Balm to the callus to help soften it.

Eyes

If your dog is destined to have 'goopy' eyes, get in the habit of wiping gently with a warm wash cloth. Nothing else should be done unless a veterinarian advises. Some BRT's tend produce a lot of eye goop.

Caring For Your Pet's Teeth

Gum disease and broken teeth are the major concerns for animals' teeth. Fortunately, pets seldom suffer from tooth decay. Regular brushing and professional cleaning can keep your pet's teeth healthy and gleaming. Giving pets appropriate toys to chew prevents fractures. What you feed your pet affects its dental health. Dry foods and treats help clean plaque from the teeth. There are a number of knobby plastic toys on the market. None of these are hard enough to cause tooth damage, but you need to watch your pet to be sure small pieces of the toys aren't torn off and swallowed.