

CLAIM OF THE MONTH

CHRONIC OTITIS

Pet: Jojo* a 5 year-old male English Bulldog



JOJO'S STORY:

Jojo was adopted as a puppy in 2018. During his first puppy vaccines, the veterinarian informed Jojo's family that while Jojo was in great health, unfortunately, his breed was prone to numerous health conditions. Prudently, the family enrolled in pet insurance immediately, and made sure to include hereditary conditions in their coverage.

At around three years of age, Jojo began to have ear infections in his right ear. The infections would improve with treatment, but always seemed to come back. The infections reoccurred so many times, that the tissue within his ear canal began to swell and proliferate. Bacterial cultures started to show the appearance of antibiotic resistant bacteria. The infections became increasingly painful, smelly, and difficult to treat. To improve Jojo's health and comfort, his veterinarian recommended a surgical procedure called a TECA-BO, or Total Ear Canal Ablation with Bulla Osteotomy.

ABOUT THE CONDITION: CHRONIC OTITIS

Otitis externa is the inflammation of the ear canal. Inflammation of the skin inside the ear is often caused by allergies/atopy. The surface of inflamed skin is warmer and more moist than healthy skin...and this is especially true inside the ears where heat and moisture are trapped. Unfortunately, this creates a perfect environment for bacteria and yeast to flourish. It is normal for some microbes to live in the ears, but under the influence of inflammation, the types and numbers of microbes present become harmful, contributing to tissue damage, and increased immune response. Inside the ear canal, secondary changes occur as a result of the tissue damage, including proliferation and mineralization of the ear canal.

Repeated treatments with ear drops can lead to antibiotic resistance. Additionally, dogs with recurrent otitis are often in a lot of pain. They often start to resist cleaning and medication of their ears.

TREATMENT

Otitis externa is treated with ear cleaning, antibiotic/antifungal ear drops, and pain medications. Additionally, if the infections are recurrent, the root cause, such as food allergies, will be investigated and treated.

Bacterial and fungal cultures may be performed to identify the microbes present, and select the ideal antibiotic treatment.



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When ear infections reoccur frequently, lead to chronic changes in the ear canal, and become resistant to treatment, a surgical procedure called TECA-BO may be recommended. This procedure removes all of the tissue of the ear canal. It also allows flushing and removal of infected tissue from the tympanic bulla, a middle-ear structure which may harbor bacteria and yeast.

The TECA-BO procedure is considered a salvage procedure because it results in loss of hearing in the treated ear. However, patients are often much more comfortable afterwards, and maintain the normal appearance of their pinna (ear flap).

The goal of the procedure is to eliminate pain and future incidents of otitis.

CLAIM OUTCOME

Jojo required two years of treatment for recurrent cases of otitis. On top of that, his TECA-BO procedure cost his family \$6,458.00 in veterinary fees. His Pet Partners Companion Plus policy reimbursed them \$4,945.00 of those fees. We are happy to report that Jojo has many comfortable years ahead of him!

*Name changed for privacy

**Source: 2022 PTZ Insurance claims data. Value of claims in \$ CAD.

