ZEPPS OPERATION (Ablation of the Vertical Ear Canal)

This operation is a surgical procedure, which is often performed on animals that have persistent and recurring ear infections. Because the ear canals in cats and dogs have a horizontal and vertical component, this means that there is poor drainage of pus, wax and other secretions. In addition to this, in cases of long standing (chronic) ear infections, the lining of the ear canals become thickened (hyperplastic), which blocks the canal and further reduces drainage. Without drainage the resulting build-up of pus and debris makes an ideal environment for bacteria and yeast’s to survive. This makes it extremely difficult to clear up some of these ear infections. Flushing the ear out (usually done under general anaesthesia) will help, but the infection often recurs.

A Zepps operation removes the vertical part of the ear canal, and allows any discharges to flow straight from the short horizontal tube leading from the eardrum. In addition to greatly improved drainage, there is better air circulation (to allow the ear to dry out) and medication is more easily applied deep into the ear canal where it is most often needed.

The operation has a good success rate with minimal trauma to the animal. Because surgery is being performed in an infected area, postoperative antibiotics are required for one week after surgery and a head bucket or Elizabethan collar is used. This minimises self-inflicted trauma to the surgical wounds.