

NO GOOIES, NO IRRITATION EAR TAPING

(Aftercare of the cropped ear)
by Jill Swedlow

Once your puppy has been cropped, the racks or cups are off, and the ear is healed, it's time for the after care to begin. Without proper aftercare, the ears are unlikely to stand properly. Be sure that the ears are completely healed. If there are one or two areas still scabby, be sure not to tape over them or place a tiny bit of cotton there with some antibiotic powder so the tape won't stick to it.

There are probably as many after care methods as there are breeders. The two basic differences in most methods are that one completely encloses the ear and the ear canal and the others leave it open to the air. I don't care for the enclosed method as not only is it extremely irritating to the puppy, it often causes infection or a major case of the gooey. The gooey is when you get this disgusting gray goo under the more enclosed areas of tape. I much prefer and recommend any method which leaves the ear open to the air. I've included my method and directions below.

You will need:

1. Foam pipe insulation, available at any hardware store. Cut these long enough to reach from the top of the "bump" (Figure 1) of the ear to just past the ear tip. Then cut lengthwise so that each appliance will be about 1 inch wide. Remove the plastic strip that protects the sticky side of the insulation.
2. Johnson & Johnson's "Zonas" adhesive tape 1" wide roll. You'll probably find this at your vets, or a hospital supply although some drug stores carry it. It's also sold under the name of "Sports Tape" by

Johnson & Johnson in the drug store. However most of that is 1 1/2 inches wide so you'll have to tear it lengthwise.

3. Benzoin compound. Available from you drug store but you'll probably have to order it.

4. Q-Tips

5. Bandage scissors

6. Antibiotic powder, BFI powder or even Dr. Scholls foot powder.

7. Alcohol

8. Cotton balls or gauze squares

9. Surgical glue or ear cement (use this only if you are having trouble getting the tape to stay put after a day or two. If you do use this, use it very sparingly. Only a dot or 2 on the inside and outside of the ear should suffice. When you remove it be sure and use adhesive remover.

11. Adhesive remover

PREPARATION

After you've cut the pipe insulation, take the tape and back wrap it so it's sticky side out. Set aside.

Next, cut 2 pieces each of 1 tape long enough to wrap twice around the base of the ear, approximately 10" long. Cut 2 pieces each of 1" tape, approximately 9", 6" & 3" in length.

PREPARE THE EARS

Clean the ears well with alcohol and dry thoroughly. Next, using a couple Q-Tips, paint the ear with the Benzoin compound. Paint the inside of the ear from the "bump" (See Figure 1) to the tip. Paint the outside of the ear to the tip and pay particular attention to the outside of the base. Allow to dry until tacky, about 2-3 minutes.

Shake a small amount of the antibiotic powder in the little fold at the base of the ear on top of the head. (Figure 1). This will help prevent the "gooies" that usually start here.

Next take one of the back wrapped appliances and set it into the inside of the ear just resting on the "bump". Smooth and apply pressure until stuck firmly (Figure 2).

Take the 9" long piece of tape and wrap it around the base of the ear and appliance as shown in Figure 5. It is important to keep tension on the ear at this point (Figure 4). You want the base pulled out from the head and slightly to the side so you can tape it properly in order for it to stand (Figure 4). Wrap in the direction of the small ear fold at base of ear. Wrap snug but not too tight and angle the tape down into the base of the ear where it meets the head (Figure 5).

Next take one of the 3" pieces of tape and starting flat at the upper 1/3 of the inside of the ear appliance, take it up and over the tip of the ear and down the back. Figure 3.

Now take the 9" piece of 1" wide tape and wrap it around the ear base about $\frac{1}{4}$ " above the top of the roller. The 6" piece goes around the ear in the middle of the ear and another 3" piece wraps the very tip of the ear. (Figure 6).

Repeat the procedure on the other ear. [Note that the tape will be pulled tighter than shown in the illustration.] For the first couple tapings after cropping (that is, after the incisions have healed, sutures are removed and the rack or cups are off) it's a good idea to brace the ears across the top of the head.

BRACING THE TAPED EARS (Figure 7). Cut a piece of 1" tape long enough to reach from one ear to the other, circle the ear, return to the first ear, circle it, and wrap about half way back to the other ear. Ears should be held erect, and allowed to turn into a naturally held position, usually slightly out from the side of the head. You'll need a helper to hold the ears while you tape. (You need a helper throughout the entire procedure, for that matter!) Start taping at the front of one ear, span to the other, circle it around the back of this ear, to the front span then continue back to the first ear, overlap the tape where it begins and take a couple tight turns around the span of tape between the ears. Be very careful not to twist or turn the ears out of their natural resting position. If you come up a little short, just cut a short (about 2") piece of tape and wrap around the span between the ears a couple times. You're done! Leave ears taped about a week, then take tape off and allow ears to rest for a day. Repeat until the ears are standing.

At first the puppy will shake its head and probably scratch at his ears. This is normal right after taping has been done. If it continues for more than a couple days, you may have placed the insulation appliance incorrectly, usually too deep into the ear.

If the ears constantly flop forward or hang out to the side, you have not taped the bases close enough to the head. You can try putting another wrap of tape around the base and see if that works. If not, you'll have to re-tape the whole ear.

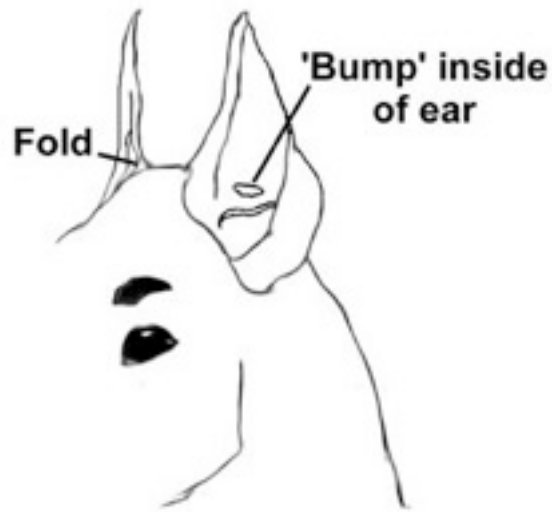


Figure 1

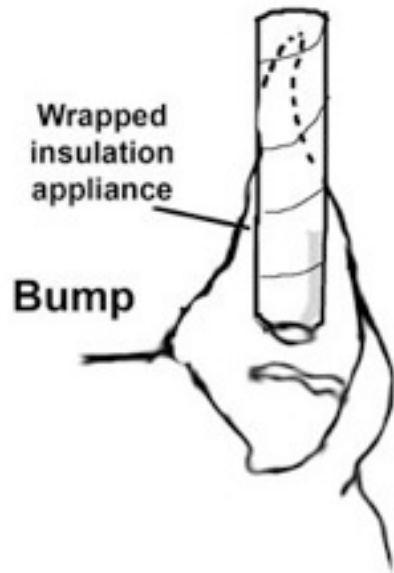


Figure 2

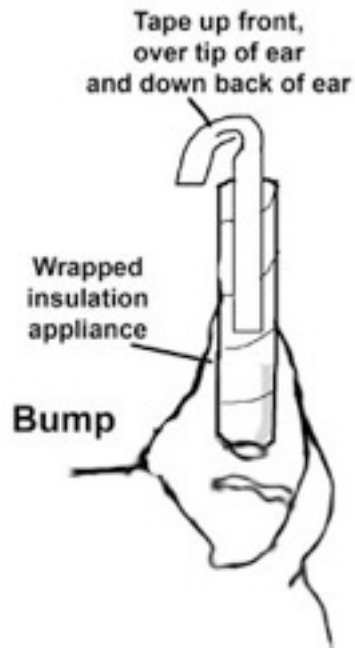


Figure 3

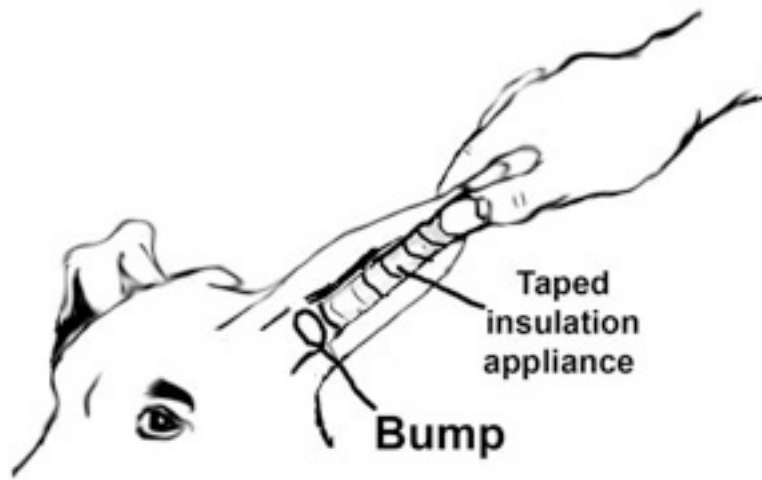


Figure 4

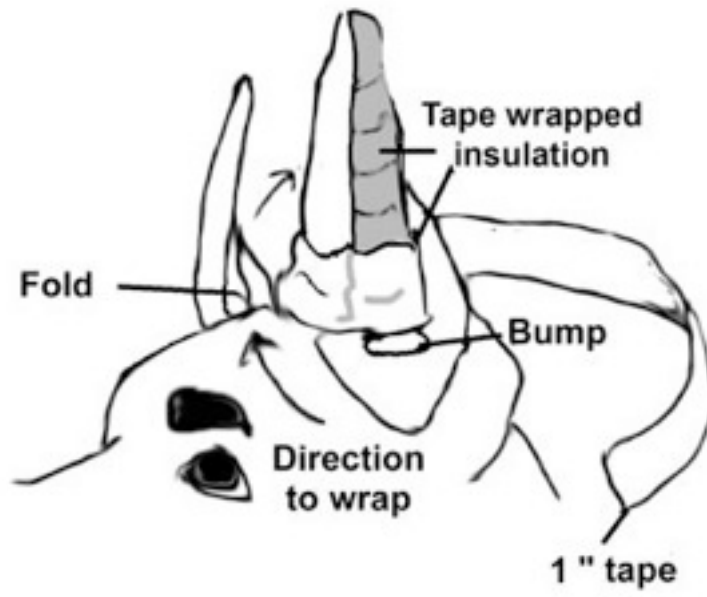


Figure 5



Figure 6

Brace ears



Figure 7