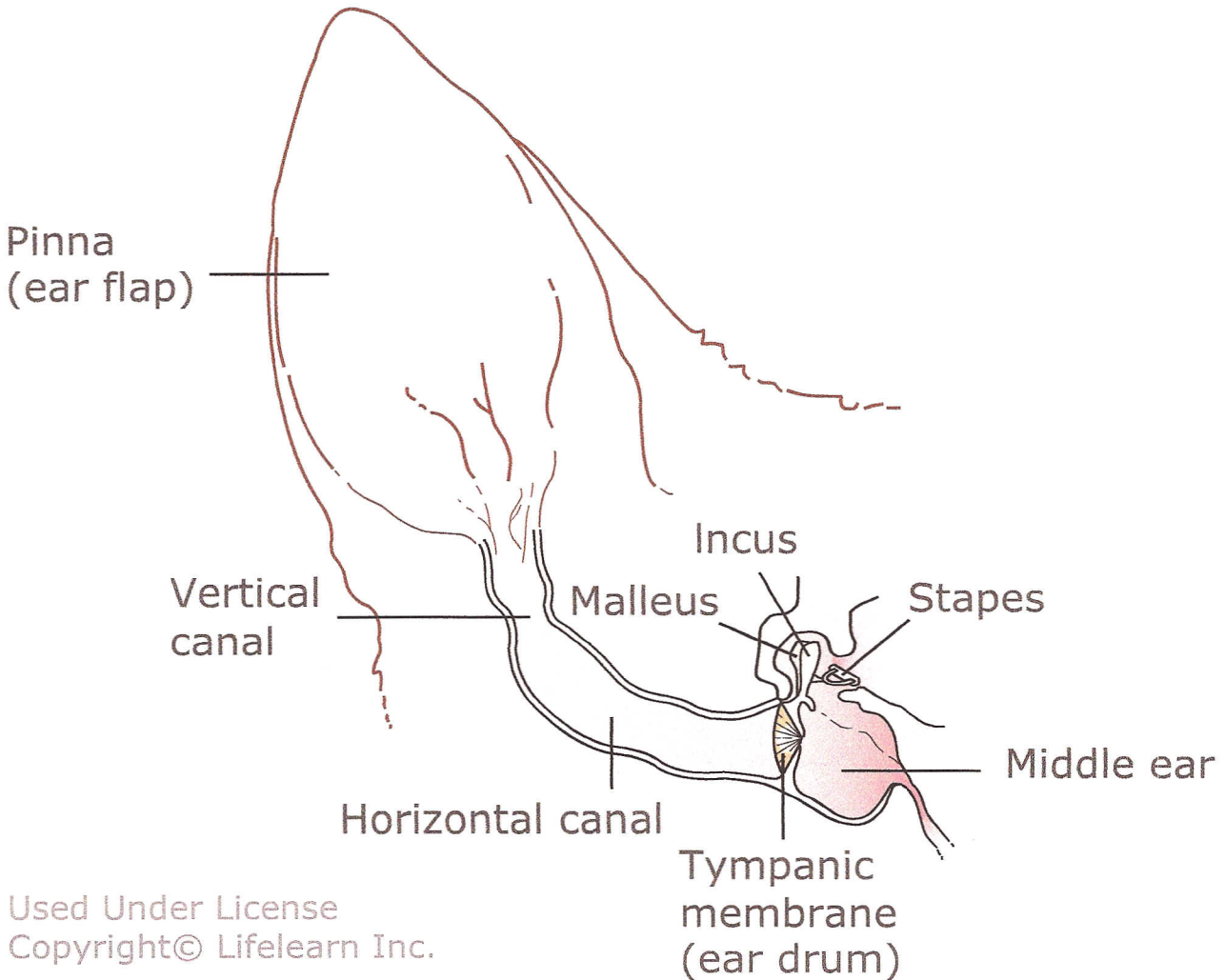


Ear Canal - Cat: Anatomy and description of inflammatory ear disease.



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The ear includes the pinna, external ear canal, eardrum, middle ear, and inner ear. The pinna collects and deflects sound waves down the ear canal to the eardrum. From the eardrum, sound passes through the bones of the middle ear to the inner ear and the brain. Any or all of these parts can be affected by disease. The most common ear condition is inflammation; otitis externa indicates inflammation of the ear parts before the eardrum; otitis media involves the middle ear; and otitis interna involves the inner ear. In severe cases, all three locations can be affected. Inflammation can be caused by bacterial or yeast infection, ear mites or other parasites, allergies, immune diseases and structural abnormalities such as polyps, etc. Common symptoms of inflammatory ear disease include redness or swelling, itching, head shaking, ear discharges, and an offensive smell. Hearing may be affected. Further details about specific ear conditions and treatments can be found in the Client Education Handout Series.