

Ear taping after cropping

This is a simple procedure. I heard so much about problems and re-taping for 5 months or even a longer! Well, in 28 years of Dane experience I never had a problem removing the tape and the ears would stand pointed up perfectly in 3 weeks or less, rarely a month. Anubis, a shorter cut because he was cropped much later at age 6 months (recommendation is to crop before 12 weeks, the goal is 8 weeks, maximum 16 weeks. The reason Anubis was done so late is because his breeder was going to keep him for himself for breeding until I talked him into selling him to me, still, on a co-ownership contract) – so, I was saying, Anubis' ears took 3 weeks, Nifi's were up and tape-free in 10 days.

Once ears are cropped, they must be "taped" for about a month to be safe, to make sure they stand permanently. If they are cropped too late, there is a chance that either one or both ears will fail to stand perfectly. In fact, many vets will refuse to crop after 12 weeks of age. The usual fee for cropping is in the neighborhood of \$280 plus related expenses.

There are several approaches by different breeders and they will all work if done right.

Cleopatra, my most recent pup, when came from the vet after cropping, she had her ears taped up to a foam (to-go) coffee cup placed upside down on the top of her head between her ears.

This procedure requires taping the ears to the foam cup. The two (outside) sides of the ears facing each other are taped to the cup placed on her head. they use of a pharmaceutical skin latex glue. A strip of two sided sticky tape is taped to the outside each ear and the other side is taped to the cup. The glue helps ensure the tape sticking to the cup and the ear.

Most procedures use a flexible thick foam glued or taped to the inside of each ear as shown below.

There are several other methods and in fact I never used the foam cup & cone approach myself. I have always used a piece of foam rod. Recently I discovered that some have another idea, a ladies tampon size super plus! I think the foam rod is simple, safe and effective.



Ok, so sutures will probably be removed from the edge of the ear about 7-10 days after surgery. The ears are usually re-taped a day or 2 later. During this time, the puppy should be separated from other dogs if possible to prevent them from licking the exposed sutures thus delaying healing and causing excessive scar

tissue formation which, in many instances, will prevent the ears from standing properly. Other pups or even mom would also lick off the antibiotic cream you apply. Generally, after the cropping, the pup will be on antibiotic medication, tablets and ointment for up to a week.

Some puppies simply are not all that interested in what is going on around them and do not try to work their ears by perking them up. If your puppy displays this behavior, use a silent dog whistle and any other means possible to try to stimulate some interest in perking the ears up.

Baby socks taped over the rear paws or a hand towel rolled like a donut and pinned around the neck will help prevent the puppy from scratching at its ears and pulling out the sutures. Several breeders don't recommend Elizabethan collars.



In the picture above, with a normal, slightly longer cut, ears may not stay angled correctly. The addition to the displayed illustration above would be taping the base of the ears together around the top of the head, to maintain the desired position of the ears, not just that each is extended. In some cases you may have to use tape and go around the neck, the bottom side too - (make sure it is not too tight, place two fingers between the tape and the bottom of the neck) and go around the head, going around each ear to position it's angle correctly.

Learning to tape your puppy's ears yourself will save you from having to pay the vet's office to do it for you. It also helps your puppy become accustomed to being handled. Don't worry if your first attempt is not as pretty as the vet can do it. You can always start over if you don't think you've done a good job and, with just a little practice, you'll get quite good at it. Another advantage of knowing how is that it can be done as often as you think it needs to be done (for example if the tape gets wet, soiled or ragged or if you wish to inspect the ears for healing progress or infection).

I usually leave the tape on the first time about 3 days then remove it by carefully sliding a blunt ended pair of scissors between the edge of the ear and the tape then slowly peeling the tape from the ears.



I then inspect the ears for dampness and infection. After I have inspected the ears, I next clean them inside and out with warm water and bacterial hand soap (like you wash your own hands with in the bathroom), rinse them thoroughly and let them air dry. Finally, I massage the ears carefully for several minutes along the edges to prevent scar formation and in the middle of the ear with a slight pulling motion from the base of the ear toward the tip while rubbing the ear back and forth between finger and thumb to stimulate circulation and to encourage the cartilage to grow straight.

1. Materials needed:

One roll of ½ inch diameter “backer rod” (available at Home Depot in the hardware section). Actually the famous tampon super-plus size with its 6 inches length and its rod-like shape, is solid enough yet harmless when bent and as such it can be used and will do the job just fine!

One pair of blunt ended scissors.

Two rolls of ½ inch width waterproof first aid sticky tape (waterproof tape helps resist moisture from other dogs should they chew or lick the tape or from water sources the puppy may encounter). If your puppy’s ears are sensitive or if your puppy objects to being handled, you may need a helper to hold the puppy while the taping is performed.

2. Cut about 7 inches length of the backer rod off the roll and, starting at one end, wrap it with a spiral from one end to the other with the first aid tape to provide the rod with some rigidity. Leave about ¼ inch of the rod uncovered at one end to provide a soft cushion which will not irritate the inside of the puppy’s ear when the rod is inserted. Next, wrap a second spiral layer of tape STICKY SIDE OUT around the rod from one end to the other still leaving the ¼ inch foam rubber end of the rod exposed. This sticky side out layer will help the rod stick to the inside of the puppy’s ear and help it to remain in place. Cut 6 four or five inch lengths of tape off and

lightly stick one end of the tape to the edge of the surface area you will be working on so they will quickly be available when you are ready for them.

3. Place the foam rubber exposed end of the tape-covered rod into the bottom of the ear well (NOT THE EAR CANAL) then press and wrap the inside and the edges of the ear around the sticky rod so that it sticks to the rod. Stretch the ear upward slightly then press it to the tape so the ear is in a completely erect position. Make sure the inside of the ear makes contact with the sticky rod from top to bottom.

3. Place a single band of tape around the outside of the ear and rod where the ear meets the top of the skull and trim off any excess tape. Place a second band of tape around the ear and rod about halfway between the base and the tip of the ear. Place a third band around the tip of the ear and the rod. DO NOT MAKE BANDS TOO TIGHT OR YOU WILL INDUCE SWELLING IN THE EAR TISSUE OR CUT OFF CIRCULATION. Cut off any excess backer rod and tape about ¼ inch above the tip of the ear. You may also wish to place a "cap" of tape from below the tip of the ear up and over the end then down the side of the rod to help keep the rod in place but I usually don't find a cap to be necessary.

4. OPTIONAL: Place a band of tape stretching from the tip of one ear across the span to the tip of the other ear forming a "bridge" to hold the ears straight up and down. Some breeders don't perform this step for four reasons: First, it is usually not necessary to get the ears to stand properly. Second, it makes it easier for the puppy to remove tape and rods from the ear when it scratches by getting its paw in the area between the skull and the horizontal bridge of tape and literally pushing the tape and rod out of and off the ears. Third, it is an excellent place for other pets to grab with their teeth and tug during play which results in a ruined tape job. Fourth, the puppy may catch it on an obstruction and hurt itself as it tries to pull free. If you decide to use this bridge between the tips of the ears, you may wish to run a "chin strap" strip or two of tape under the puppy's jaw and up to the rod in each ear on each side then a strip around the ear and the end of the chin strap where it meets the rod to help keep the tape on the ears and the rod in the ears and from being pulled out. Do not place the chin strap so far forward under the puppy's chin that it prevents free chewing or swallowing movement or so tightly or far back that it can choke the puppy if the bridge becomes entangled on an obstruction or on pulled on by other pets.

5. I then re-tape the ears for another 5 days before repeating the procedures outlined above. I usually extend the period between tapings to 7 days unless it becomes ragged or dirty. Breeders experience in average has been that usually 4-8 weeks maximum is sufficient to ensure that the ears will stand but the time may vary. In the past I have been lucky I guess and 3 weeks has been my average.

I immediately begin taping again if an ear looks like it is not ready to stand properly. As a rule, with longer cuts, the ears must be taped for longer periods before they stand well than will be necessary with shorter cuts

Now here is material submitted by another breeder:

The pipe foam method of ear taping has become quite popular. In most cases however, the post method is used for a month or so following the initial surgery.

Using the post method of dog ear taping **for the first month or two** will assure a **properly developed ear bell** and offer required support for the young pup's ear tissue.

Once the dog's ear bell is established and the ear cartilage has stiffened, the foam method of dog ear taping is a great choice. Foam supports are **much more comfortable** for your growing Dane.

Required supplies:

Pipe insulating foam for 3/4" or 1" copper pipe.

Medical adhesive tape like 3M or Johnson & Johnson, both 3/4" **and** 1-1/2" wide.

(Alternative) "Stick to itself" bandages, see "Teri's Tip" towards the bottom of the tampon/post method page.

If necessary..... **Medical adhesive** such as Skin Bond, Skin Prep pads and medical adhesive cleaner.

Antiseptic wash, hydrogen peroxide 3%, cornstarch powder.

With any method of dog ear taping, it is important to watch for signs of odor, discharge, or wetness. **Keep an eye on your dog**, constant scratching or head shaking can be an early warning sign that something has gone awry beneath the dressing!

In any event, if you notice **something out of the ordinary**, remove the tape so the ears can "breathe" for a while. Typically, it is acceptable to leave the ears "taped up" for 5 to 7-days or so without a problem.

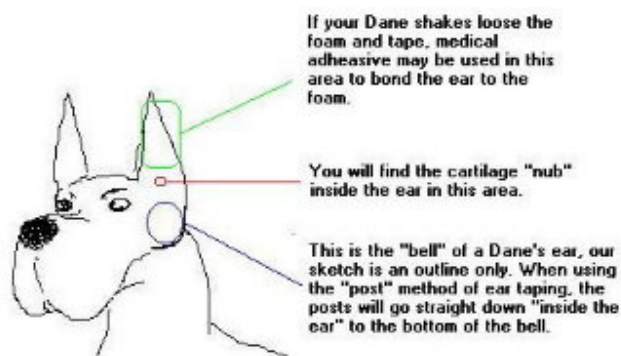
Take the opportunity to clean and inspect the ears while the tape is removed. Give them ample time to dry out and breathe.

Don't leave the ears down **for more than one day**, unless of course there are signs of infection. Leaving the ears un-taped for long periods or allowing the dog to sleep on semi-rigid ears, will most likely reverse any progress you have made with cartilage development!

Keep on taping until the ears stand proud! Stay patient, from time to time, a nicely standing ear can bend or flop for no apparent reason. Maintenance dog ear taping is not uncommon, you may need to tape an ear occasionally until it is truly set.

This article discusses the "foam method" of dog ear taping plus construction and placement of the foam stay.

As the ears "firm up" you can decrease the length of foam that goes downward into the bell and offer much more comfort to you Dane:) Over time, the bond between foam and inner ear will no longer be required. At this point of your dog ear taping adventures, simply



coat the foam with cornstarch powder and tape the ears around them.

Cut a piece of pipe foam the approximate length of your dog's ear, bell to tip. The shape should look similar to the red outline on our sketch. Trim and taper the piece as needed to achieve a nice matching fit. Dry fit the stay to assure proper shape and make any adjustments here. Once satisfied, ready your dog's ears by cleaning with antiseptic wash and leave them to dry.

About this drawing:

*Our Dane profile does not illustrate the **curve** of the ear. The **red** outline is the finished shape of the foam stay. Pipe foam is round and the ear should **curl around this rounded piece** nicely.*

Reinforce if needed!

*In the event that your foam stay isn't rigid enough to keep the ear from folding in the middle, glue or tape a Popsicle stick or **similar rigid object** to the **inside** of the foam piece.*

Alternative.....Glue?

Many dogs have a knack for destroying the tape-job by head shaking, scratching, and a variety of other crafty tricks.

If this is your Dane, **substitute** the reverse **tape** wrapping on the foam stay **with** Skin Bond or similar medical **adhesive**. Our goal is to keep the foam pieces in-place!

Ears should first be prepped with Skin Prep or similar solution to remove the oils and dirt.

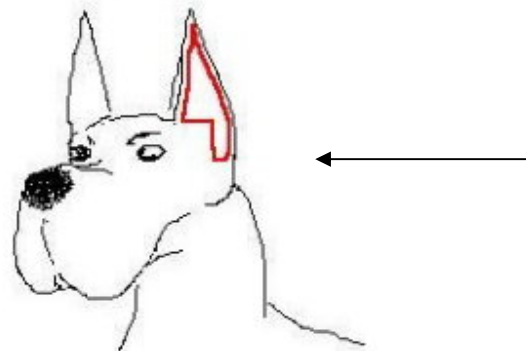
The glue works awesome and usually holds for a week until ear oils eventually break down its bond.

Most medical adhesives have a cleaner that should also be on hand to **remove the old glue** in between taping.

Tip:

When using Skin Bond or adhesives for dog ear taping, be sure to wipe out the ears with Skin Prep pads. Oils in the ear can interfere with glue adhesion, the prep pads will neutralize the oils.

This image shows proper placement of a foam support. Take your time and trim the pipe foam to obtain a nice fit, your goal is a finished piece that matches the lines of the crop.



The piece of foam that goes downward after the cartilage nub can be shortened as the ears firm up. Eventually, you can eliminate the downward piece all together, less irritation to the bell of the ear will certainly please your Dane!

We are now ready to wrap the foam stays with tape. This can be tricky, using 1-1/2" tape folded over on itself to act as a two sided tape usually works best. Due to the odd shape and angles of the stay it is also difficult to wrap a piece of tape continuously, using numerous 4" pieces will be much easier.

Once the posts are nice and sticky (with tape or adhesive), go get your Dane:) Hold the ear up straight and press the stay firmly against the inside of the ear. Have some 4" pieces of 3/4" tape ready and wrap from the opposite side of the post at three areas. One as close to the base as possible, one wrap in the middle, and a wrap about 1/2" down from the tip.

Grab the roll of 3/4" tape now and beginning at the base, start wrapping upward all the way to the tip. There is a small flap of skin at the base of the ear that should be folded back under the tape.

After both ears are wrapped up, cut a 16" piece of 3/4" tape. Hold the ears in correct position and use the tape to connect the bases together. Length of this linkage will have to be adjusted at times if the ears begin to fall inward or outward.

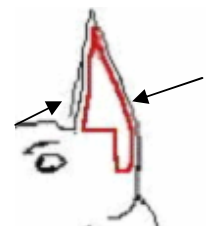
Important!

While wrapping tape around the ear, **don't wrap too tight**, this can cause circulation loss and tissue damage! We are trying to "lay" the tape around the ear, use just as much tension as required, don't over due it.

Now here are three methods I (Paul Gouda) used:

1- The foam rod method I explained above is simple and effective.

2- Get a piece of foam and cut it to the shape shown in red, shape it like the ear, apply skin glue, pull the ear up to make sure it's stretched up and tape the foam to the inside of each ear; hold in place for a few minutes. Then tape on the outside of the ear, first at the base near the top of the head, then near the top of the ear. Make sure to keep the natural ear fold (see the arrow above, the right arrow you would fold the ear edge inward to the left; and the left arrow you would fold the ear edge away from the other ear to the right). Finally tape the base of the two ears together to control the angle of the ears. Make sure you have two ear folds in the directions shown by arrows

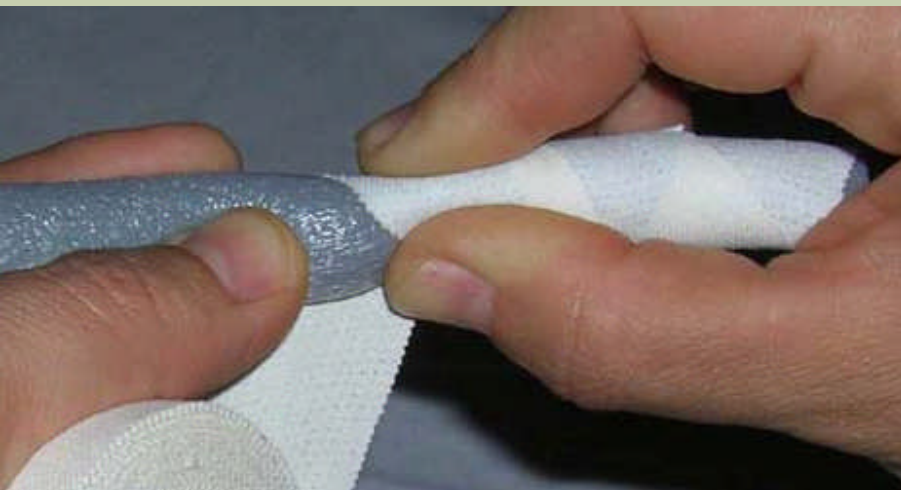


3- I found a product at HomeDepot, a flexible rubber-wrapped rod that you can shape. It takes and keeps the shape and angle you make and yet firm enough to stay in the shape you made and soft on the outside with thick foam coating. You can use it in the ear and out and around the dead, and just tape around it. Perfect.

Now, more on-line material on the subject:



Picture 1



Picture 2

Ear Taping (posting) method

Post the ears and leave them up to six days, then take down but never leave them un-taped overnight. Re-tape the ears for another 6 days.

**You need (See picture 1):
Peroxide or Rubbing Alcohol.
Backer Rod 5/8" wide (ask in any HomeDepot)
Tape
Scissors**

Start by cutting the piece of Backer rod, a little larger than the length of the ear.

Take tape and start taping firmly around the rod to achieve the flexible but tight ear-stick. (See picture 2).

When you have taped it to the end, reverse and start taping in the opposite direction, making sure that the sticky surface is now outside of the ear-stick. (See pictures 3 and 4). Continue taping until all of the surface of the rod is taped with the sticky surface facing outwards.

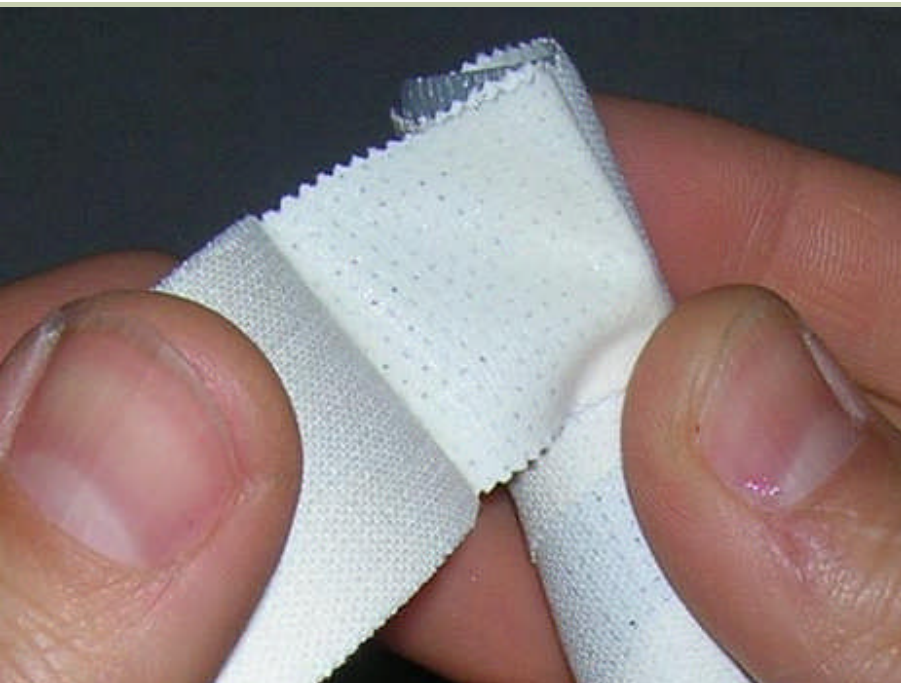


Figure 3

Now tape the second rod in the same manner. Cut 2 pieces of tape 6-7" and 2 shorter pieces of 3"



Figure 4

Clean the ears with the tampons and the rubbing alcohol if you have not already done this, if the ears are not quite healed use peroxide instead. Dry the ears thoroughly with a dry paper towel.

Press the sticky rod to the inside of the ear. (Picture 5) Stretch the ear along the rod.



ture 5



ture 6

Take one of the 6'' strips and press one end into sticky surface of the rod (under an angle) (See red line on the picture 7). Leave the blue area (sticky surface) to be able to secure a good grip for the other end of the tape strip. Start taping around the base in the direction of ear fold (See Picture 6) (towards the inside), making sure that the fold is not twisted or squeezed. Be careful do not tape too tightly, as it may stop the circulation of blood into the ear. Go around the ear one time and press the tape against the blue area (sticky area) of the rod.



Cut the end of the strip. (Picture 8)

note the ear fold. You need to fold the ear in both end and in two different directions. In other words the ears must not be pulled up flat. I'll enter a hand drawn illustration at the end.

Picture 7



Cut the rod at the top of the ear. (Picture 9)

ape around the very top of the ear lightly, you can cut off circulation by putting too much pressure.

Picture 8



(Picture 10) The sticky surface of the rod and the sticky surface of the tape will keep the rod in a secure position.

ture 9



Do the same procedure with the second ear. Using this method, you do not need to tape in-between the ears. The rods will keep the ears in the vertical position. (Picture 11). The dog will be able to move the ears freely and you will avoid wrong posting that sometimes happens when one ear is taped to the other ear in a figure 8-manner - then one ear might be pulling the other into the wrong position and creating a crinkle. It often happens during sleep, when the dog may accidentally lay on one of the ear and pull the other one in an awkward position.

ture 10



Although this material was not posted by a Dane breeder; the information are still applicable. However, note here that with a Dane you are likely going to need to build a bridge between the two ears by taping the base of the ears together to control the angle.

ture 11

Here is another article posted on line – obviously for free & public viewing

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 your drug store but you'll probably have to order it.
4. Q-Tips
5. Bandage scissors
6. Antibiotic powder, BFI powder or even Dr. Scholl's 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.

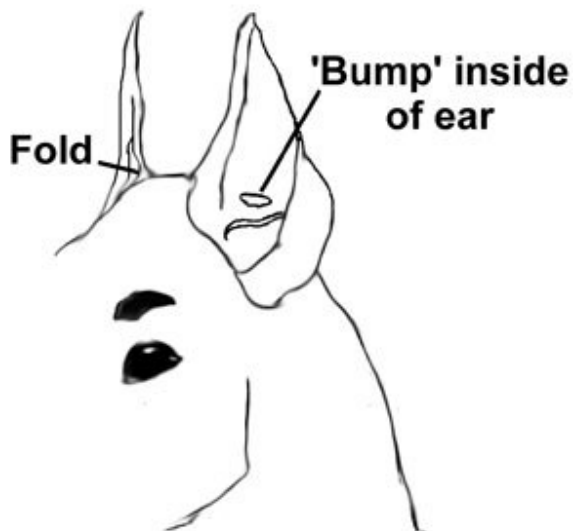


Figure 1

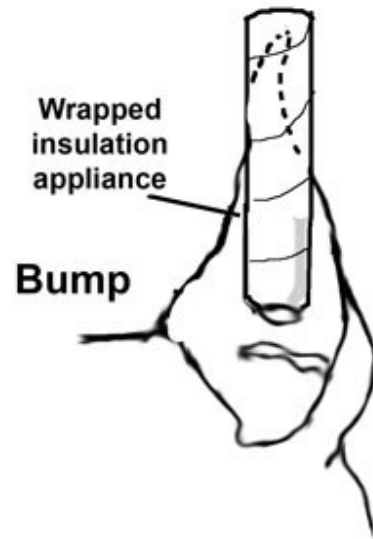


Figure 2

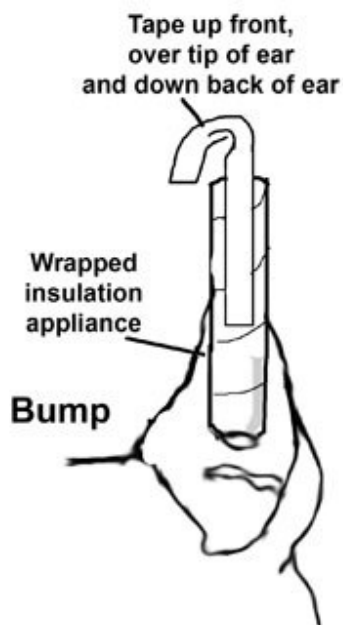


Figure 3

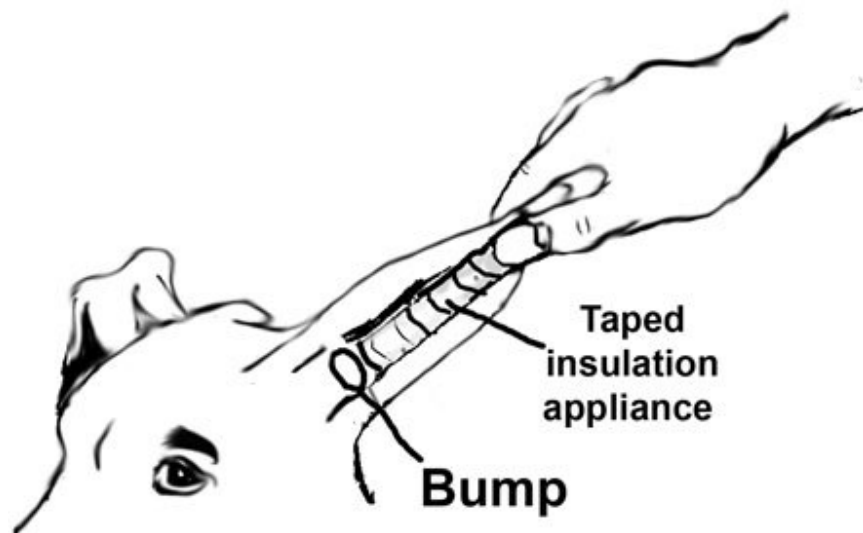


Figure 4

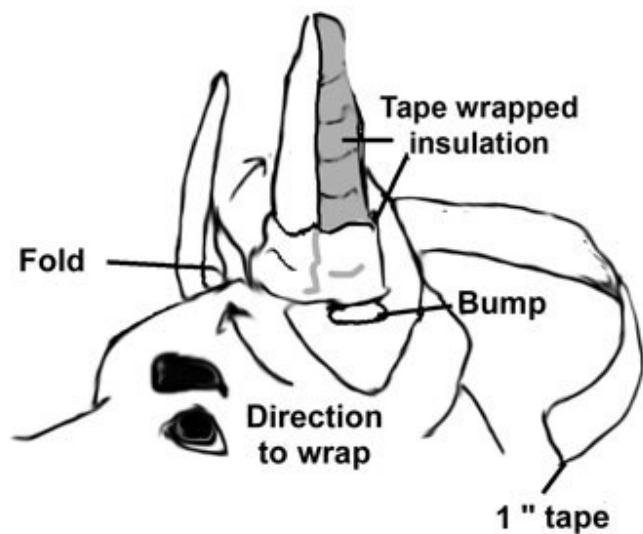


Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7

Finally, the best part (conditionally) .. a clear 3-part video on ear taping. This tape was also placed on line – again, obviously for free public viewing, and that's what we're doing, no commercial use of any educational material provided is exercised or permitted.

Now, before I post these videos, I have to express limited reservation on a few points. Here is what I don't recommend:

- 1- No need to tape-cover the whole ear. Start at the bottom, one in the centre and one at the top are sufficient. That will allow better air circulation and better visible inspection of the ear to monitor infection.
- 2- Do not cut the foam rod at the end. Measure first and cut then use it. No need to risk cutting the Dane's ear and accidentally poking him as he suddenly turns his head.
- 3- Instead of a foam rod, a ladies super plus tampon works better.
- 4- Use glue. I use "OSTO-Bond skin bonding latex adhesive" a Canadian product made by M.O.C. and "Solvo-Plast II" adhesive remover.
- 5- Use a piece of wider and thick foam between the bottom base of the two ears if you have a problem controlling the angle of pointing the ears.
- 6- If done right, there is no reason why 2 weeks, maximum 3 or even 4 if the dog has a softer ear – after which they should stand fine. 2 or 3 months of re-taping indicates a problem in the application.

Now here are the videos. I hope to have the time next breeding to make my own video and when I do, I'll post for public education, free with no restrictions.

[Note that our library contains illustrative](#)
[Videos on ear taping](#)