

DRY EYE

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Symptoms

- Rubbing eyes
- Thick discharge
- Swollen eyes
- Squinting
- Red eyes

Breeds

- Pugs
- English Bulldogs
- Shih-Tzus
- Pekingese
- West Highland Terriers
- Cocker Spaniels
- Springer Spaniels
- Llaso Apsos

Treatment

Lifelong immunosuppressive eye ointments. Treatment of corneal ulcers.

Saline drops should be avoided.



Keratoconjunctivitis Sicca

Dry eye is a painful and potentially dangerous condition that occurs because of lack of tear production. There are a number of different symptoms you can see if your dog has this issue. Common signs include: pawing or rubbing at the eyes, redness, dullness of the cornea, thick discharge, sensitivity to light, swollen eyelids, squinting, ulceration of the cornea, blinking excessively, and impaired vision. In most cases the eyes start off itchy, red, and irritated and if left untreated they can progress to corneal ulceration due to lack of lubrication and/or mechanical trauma.





Diagnosis

Dry eye can be easily diagnosed by your veterinarian. They will perform a Schirmer tear test, which involves placing a paper strip into the tear pool at the corner of your dog's eye. The strip will remain in place for one minute in order to measure tear production. In a normal dog, the strip should wet the paper at least a distance of 20mm. If less than 15 mm is wet then the dog has dry eye.

Treatment

Treatment of dry eye will include various ophthalmic drops and ointments, however your veterinarian's choice depends on the severity and cause of the disease. If corneal ulceration is present then this should be taken care of immediately. Typically antibiotic and corneal repair drops or ointments will be prescribed for this issue. It is important to remember that corneal ulcers can progress to loss of vision if not properly and quickly treated. Immunosuppressive ophthalmic ointments are the mainstay of treatment for chronic dry eye. It is typically necessary to keep dogs with dry eye on this medication for their entire life. Lapse in treatment with immunosuppressive ointments can result in the return of symptoms. The symptoms will likely resolve once the medication is started again. Saline drops should be avoided in dogs with dry eye since it washes away the lipid layer of the tear film. This layer provides protection and lubrication. If severe inflammation of the eye is present and no ulceration or scratches then your veterinarian may prescribe a topical corticosteroid to help reduce the irritation.

