

This factsheet has been prepared to help you understand deep corneal ulceration and corneal melting ulcers. Whilst it is hoped this factsheet addresses many concerns you may have, please contact us if you have any further questions regarding the condition.

What is a corneal ulcer and why does it occur?

An ulcer is a hole of a certain depth (superficial or deep) in the surface of the eye (cornea). There are several reasons for ulcers to develop including:

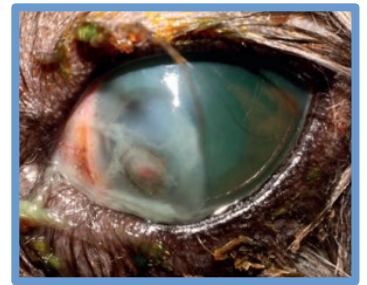
- trauma
- tear film deficiencies
- abnormally grown hairs in contact with the cornea
- foreign bodies



Deep ulcers are regarded as an emergency, which may require immediate surgery to save the eye.

What is a melting corneal ulcer and why does it occur?

A melting ulcer is a process in which the cornea is dissolving, either due to bacteria or due to proteins within the cornea itself. We generally regard melting ulcers as emergencies, which may require immediate surgery.



Can both eyes be affected?

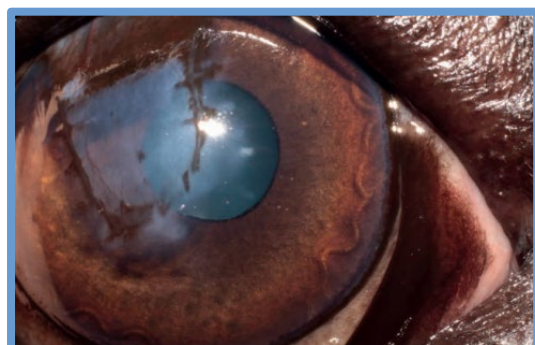
Yes, depending on the underlying cause. Usually only one eye is affected at presentation.

What treatment options do I have?

Depending on the depth of the ulcer and the presence or absence of infection, intensive medical treatment and/or surgery may be required.

Surgery usually involves removal of the damaged part of the cornea and placement of some sort of graft.

Superficial non-infected ulcers may respond well to medical treatment alone.



What happens if I do nothing?

If left untreated, ulcers can progress to the point where the eye can rupture. Once the eye has ruptured this often results in permanent loss of vision or the eye unless urgent, often complex, surgical repair is performed.

Are any breeds predisposed?

Any breed can be affected, however we see an over-representation in flat faced pets, such as Pugs, Shih Tzus, Lhasa Apsos and Persian cats. This is largely due to a combination of their eyelid shape, poor tear film quality and a difference in the sensation in the cornea.