

This factsheet has been prepared to help you understand ectopic cilia. 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 are ectopic cilia?

Ectopic cilia are abnormal hairs which emerge through the inside of the eyelid, causing irritation and in some cases ulceration of the surface of the eye. The condition usually affects young dogs.

Which signs may indicate presence of ectopic cilia?

Clinical signs associated with the condition, usually include non-healing corneal ulcers and chronic irritation of the eye.

Can both eyes be affected?

Yes, and ectopic cilia are commonly associated with the presence of distichiae (for further information please see the information sheet on Distichiasis).

Are any breeds predisposed?

Any dog breed may be affected, however, the most commonly affected breeds include: Flat-Coated Retrievers, Pekingese, Shih Tzu, Cavalier King Charles Spaniel, Boxer, English Bulldog, Poodle and Jack Russell Terrier.

What treatment options do I have?

Our usual treatment is to surgically remove the root of each abnormal hair using the high magnification provided by the operating microscope. Mere plucking of the ectopic cilia is not a permanent solution and may exacerbate the condition if the hair is torn off at the base.

What happens if I do nothing?

If ectopic cilia are not removed, severe damage to the ocular surface (cornea) may occur. This can result in the deterioration of vision and in some cases loss of the eye.

