

Ophthalmology

Information Sheet

Dry Eye

Introduction

Dry eye, also known as Keratoconjunctivitis sicca (KCS), is a common eye condition in dogs that results from insufficient tear production or poor-quality tears. Tears are essential for the lubrication, nourishment, and protection of the cornea, and when they are lacking, the surface of the eye becomes dry and inflamed, leading to discomfort, pain, and damage to the cornea. Dry eye can affect any dog breed, but it is more common in certain breeds, including Cocker Spaniels, Bulldogs, and Lhasa Apsos.

There are several reasons why a dog may develop dry eye. The most common cause is an immune-mediated disorder that damages the tear-producing glands, resulting in reduced tear production. Other possible causes include the side effects of certain medications, trauma or injury to the eye, nerve damage, and underlying health conditions (such as Diabetes).

Clinical Signs

The clinical signs of dry eye in dogs can vary in severity, depending on the underlying cause and the duration of the condition. Some of the most common signs include:

- Cloudy or hazy cornea
- Dry, scaly skin around the eye
- Redness and inflammation of the eye
- Squinting or rubbing at the eye
- Discharge from the eye (which can be thick and green in nature)

Diagnosis and Treatment

An important part of diagnosing dry eye is the Schirmer tear test, which measures the amount of tears produced by the eye. Treatment for dry eye in dogs depends on the severity of the



Ophthalmology

Information Sheet

Dry Eye

condition and the underlying cause. The primary goal of treatment is to increase natural tear production and improve the quality of tears to prevent damage to the cornea.

Common treatment options include:

- **Artificial tears:** Lubricating eye drops or ointments can help relieve dryness and protect the cornea. The frequency and type of drops will depend on the severity of the condition.
- **Cyclosporine:** This medication can help treat immune-mediated dry eye and increase tear production in dogs.
- **Tacrolimus:** This medication is similar to cyclosporine and may be more appropriate for some patients.
- **Antibiotics:** Antibiotics may be prescribed to treat any secondary bacterial infections that may occur as a result of dry eye.
- **Surgery:** In severe cases that cannot be controlled by medication, a surgery known as parotid duct transposition surgery can be performed. Parotid duct transposition surgery is a procedure that involves rerouting the salivary duct from the parotid salivary gland onto the eyes surface. The surgery aims to provide a new source of moisture to the eye by redirecting saliva flow and can eliminate the need to apply lubricating drops to the eye.