

Dry Eye

Owner information sheet





'Dry Eye', also known as keratoconjunctivitis sicca (KCS), is a medical condition in dogs where production of a layer of the tear film of the affected eyes is interrupted. Tears are very important for the overall health of the eye, providing lubrication, moisture and supplying the eye with essential nutrients to keep them healthy. Without tears, the eye will become diseased causing pain, and ultimately can affect vision in the long term or even loss of the eye.

Dry eye is usually caused by an abnormality of the local immune system supplying the eye. The immune system attacks the glands that produce the liquid part of the tear film. If not managed appropriately, this is very uncomfortable for the dog and can lead to painful secondary infections.

Several breeds of dog are predisposed to dry eye, including West Highland White terriers, Cavalier King Charles Spaniels, Pugs, Yorkshire Terriers, Shih Tzus and Lhasa Apsos.

Clinical signs of dry eye include:

- Excessive discharge around the eyelids
- Eyes that have lost their natural shine
- Conjunctivitis
- Hazy appearance to the eyes
- Eye ulcers
- Rubbing face on walls/doors

Dry eye is managed with daily medications but not cured. There are different types of eye drop treatments that help with tear production, lubricating the eyes and reducing the risk of inflammation and infection.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR MY RESCUE ANIMAL AND ME?

Your dog has been diagnosed with dry eye by our team of vets. By using special paper strips known as Schirmer Tear Tests we have found that your dog has reduced tear production. Our vets have started your dog on eye drops but you will need to follow up with your own veterinary surgeon to continue managing your dog's dry eye. This will require daily medication, though the products required to manage your dog's condition may change over time, and should be fully discussed with your vet at regular health checks.

Please also remember that there will be insurance exclusions relating to the diagnosis made in the rescue centre. These exclusions should be clarified with your chosen insurance provider before choosing a policy.