

Yes – You Can Manage Dog Eye Problems Naturally!

By Dee Blanco

Common Dog Eye Problems

These are some of the **most common dog eye problems** that I see. Many of them may seem serious, but a little knowledge can help ease your stress. It will also help you create a strategy for treatment.

Cherry Eye

Cherry Eye is like a bubble, usually an inflammation of the third eyelid. It may show up on one side, then on the other. It may seem scary, but it's usually fairly easy to treat.

Lenticular Sclerosis

Lenticular Sclerosis is usually confused with cataracts and sometimes called cloudy eyes. It's oxidation in the center of the lens and it's usually a result of oxidative stress in the body. You'll see an opaque circle, usually with dark around the outside, but the lens won't be entirely white. Dogs can usually see through lenticular sclerosis.

Cataracts

True cataracts are often hereditary and can occur from age or from trauma. They're a clouding of the lens. It's very difficult to see through a cataract.

Ectropion

A dog with saggy eyelids likely has ectropion. This is when the eyelids turn out. The conjunctiva shows because the bottom eyelid doesn't come up and protect the eye. Bacteria and other foreign material can get in there and cause irritation.

Entropion

Entropion is a turning in of the eyelid. It's quite dangerous and painful. The eyelids and eyelashes turn in and rub on the cornea. It's usually a result of shameful breeding practices. There will be discharge because bacteria gets in there and can't get out. Entropion can cause ulcers. It's common in short-nosed dogs. Surgery is usually the only answer.

Conjunctivitis

Conjunctivitis is an inflammation of the tissues surrounding the inner eyelids and the sclera. It can come with an upper respiratory tract infection or because of dry eye or other irritants.

Sometimes dogs with unpigmented third eyelids will look like they have conjunctivitis. This is because the conjunctiva always looks a little pink, but usually there isn't anything wrong.

Dry Eye

Dry eye is literally just that, dry eyes. Maybe you've been to the vet and they've used those little green pieces of paper? They put them between the eyelids to measure the level of fluid in the eye? That's to check for dry eye. If your dog isn't producing enough tears, it can be painful and hard to open the eye all the way. Your dog can rub at her eye and irritate it further. Eyelids will stick because there's not enough moisture.

Pannus

Pannus is when blood vessels coming from the sclera start to grow over the cornea, they're not supposed to be there. They obscure the vision. It can be very uncomfortable. It can come on slowly or quickly. It's a chronic disease and often an auto-immune disease (as many of these are).

Irritations

General irritations usually happen when fur/hair are constantly hanging in the eyes. This can constantly irritate the eye. This wicks the moisture out of the eye, causing dry eye. Even just giving a dog with long hair hanging in the eye's bangs can help tremendously.

Lacrimal Duct Issues

The little ducts that go from the corner of the eye into the nose are called the lacrimal ducts. Some dogs have closed lacrimal ducts, or if there's a lot of discharge, bacteria can build up. It's common with smaller dogs.

Glaucoma is another dog eye problem.

If your animal is struggling and seems to be in pain when you're cleaning, it's probably a good time to go to your vet.

There are a few ways to keep your dog's eyes protected and keep dog eye problems at bay. Many of these are also going to help when it comes to management.

1. Cleaning

- Use a clean cotton cloth with warm water.
- You can also use 4x4 gauze. Then you can throw them away.
- Always start at the centre (closest to the nose) and clean out.
- Be very gentle.
- You can also use a warm saline solution – just a tiny bit of salt. I'm talking ¼ cup water with just a tiny pinch of salt. Just dip your cloth in there and use that to clean the eye.

If your animal is struggling and seems to be in pain when you're cleaning, it's probably a good time to go to your vet.

2. Eye Protection

If your dog likes to hang his head out the window, you need to protect her eyes. This is a pet peeve of mine, but if your dog does it, at least get some goggles, or “doggles,” to protect the eyes. There are so many things on the road (dirt, sticks, bugs) that can damage the eyes.

3. Nutrition to Support The Eyes

A fresh, varied diet promotes eye health. Changing to a fresh food diet can also really improve vision and help eye issues heal.

- Carotene-rich foods – you know, all those orange foods like carrots and pumpkin
- Blueberries – they’re loaded with antioxidants
- Broccoli and Kale – full of healthy phytonutrients
- Sardines –packed with all those omega oils

4. Healing Herbs

- Astaxanthin – a particular kind of algae. It’s loaded with antioxidants and phytonutrients
- Marigold – a potent source of zeaxanthin, a carotenoid that’s important for eye health
- Eyebright – provides nutrients and is very healing and soothing
Make a herbal tincture:
Add about an ounce of the herb in a quart of boiling water
Let it sit for at least an hour (I let it sit overnight)
Use those drops to the rinse out the eye.
It’s very gentle so you can use it as often as you want to – 2, 3, 4 times a day.
- *Euphrasia Officinalis* 30C – the Eyebright homeopathic remedy. This is one of the safest things you can use and beautiful for healing the eye. Give 1-2 pellets twice or three times a day

When To See Your Vet

The eyes are sensitive. The eyes don’t regenerate very quickly, especially when there’s an issue with the cornea.

Because of this I always say to talk to your vet sooner rather than later.

You’ll want to make an appointment if there’s been any:

- fever or illness before the eye issue
- pawing/rubbing of the eye
- crying
- trying to hold the eye shut
- chance of puncture or irritation
- change that comes on suddenly

When dogs start to show issues in the eye area, many dog owners get worried. And that's fair. However, if you know the anatomy of the eye and the cause of some of the most common dog eye problems, you'll feel better. This will also help you figure out when (and how) you can treat these issues at home, naturally.

About the Author Dee Blanco

Dr Dee Blanco DVM graduated in 1977 from New Mexico State University with a Bachelors of Science in Biology. As an undergraduate she interned at NASA-Ames Research Center and the Hollman Air Force Base in laboratory animal medicine. She received her veterinary degree from Colorado State University in 1981. She is a graduate of the Academy of Veterinary Homeopathy in 1992 and has certification in acupuncture by the International Veterinary Acupuncture Society. From the Land of Enchantment, Santa Fe, New Mexico, she consults, teaches and treats.

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