

Red Eye

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Overview

Red eye is a non-specific sign of inflammation or infection. Some conditions associated with a red eye can be painful, itchy and cause sensitivity to light resulting in squinting or the eye being held closed. A red eye may be seen with diseases of the external eyelids, third eyelid, conjunctiva, cornea, or sclera. It may also occur with inflammation of the structures inside the eye, with glaucoma, uveitis or with certain diseases of the eye socket. Either one or both eyes can become red, depending upon the cause of the problem.

Eyes become reddened when blood vessels of the conjunctiva (the pink lining of the eyeball and eyelids), sclera (white covering of the eye), or cornea (clear surface of the eye) become enlarged or more numerous.

Diagnosis and Treatment Notes:

- Red eye is typically diagnosed through history and complete eye examination. Determining the cause of the red eye requires further testing such as a Schirmer tear test, fluorescein staining, tonometry to measure eye pressure, tissue scrapings to test for bacteria, parasites, viruses or biopsies of masses around the eye. Depending on the underlying cause, bloodwork and x-rays may also be recommended.
- Treatment depends on the underlying disorder, severity of the disease, your individual pet, and your veterinarian. Treatment may include anti-inflammatory medication, antibiotics, lubricant eye drops, or surgery in some cases. Discuss treatment details when your pet is evaluated and the underlying condition is diagnosed.

What to Watch for*:

- Redness of the eye or structures around the eye
- Squinting, increased blinking, holding the eye closed
- Pawing or rubbing at the eye
- Possible decrease in vision or blindness
- Possible cloudiness of the eye
- Tearing or discharge from the eye

* Pets that scratch or rub at its eye can do significant damage and should be evaluated immediately. An "e-collar" may be required to prevent additional injury. *Please notify us if you notice any of the above signs or if you have any questions!*