

Cataracts in Dogs

Cataracts in canines occur when the normally transparent lens of the eye becomes opaque. Cloudy eyes which can be seen with the naked eye are a sure sign of cataracts.

Even though the cloudiness may look like it is on the surface of the eye (the cornea), it is not. Any spot on the lens that is opaque, regardless of size, is a cataract.

Cataracts may affect one or both eyes. Some cataracts are clearly visible to the naked eye, appearing as white or bluish dots, while others are visible only by examination with an ophthalmoscope.

Many dogs develop cataracts as they age and these cataracts may stay small or may worsen until the dog becomes blind. The majority of cataracts are inherited and are found in breeds such as the Cocker Spaniel, Poodle, Husky, Schnauzer, Golden and Labrador Retrievers, and terriers. Other ailments, such as diabetes, trauma, inflammation, and some puppy milk replacers can also cause cataracts. Treatment of Cataracts Unfortunately there are no magic pills or "wonder" creams and surgery remains the only effective treatment.

Cataracts may be surgically removed in one or both eyes however, at around \$1000 - \$2000 per eye, cataract surgery is expensive and requires significant commitment, administering of eye drops several times daily before surgery and for about 6 weeks after surgery. Your dog must wear a protective plastic e-collar for 2 weeks after surgery, and your pet will not be able to be groomed or vaccinated during the 6 week healing period. With early treatment, the success rate is currently OVER 90% but, as with any surgery, there are risks and your veterinary ophthalmologist will discuss these risks with you prior to treatment. Although a cataract left untreated can lead to a spontaneous lens capsule rupture (requiring the eye to be removed) these cases are rare proportionately. Dogs with cataracts cope surprisingly well; they soon create a mental map of their surroundings and it is often the case where the dogs' lack of sight troubles the owner more than the dog.

About the Author

Noel Dundas is the author of several publications, including The [Canine Diabetes Management Guide](#) and the [Canine First-Aid Handbook](#). Computing since the late 60's, he is a self professed Geek and has become someone to turn to for advice on canine diabetes. You can contact him for advice about the [diabetes symptoms dogs exhibit](#) at www.DogDiabetesSite.com/contact.html for reliable and free advice.

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