

Common Canine Eye Disorders

Many eye conditions in dogs are heritable, and as a result, some are more common in specific dog breeds. In this handout, we'll review some of the most common eye conditions and the breeds most likely to be impacted by them. Although some eye conditions can be determined via a genetic test, many dogs will need a screening by a veterinary ophthalmologist. Your primary care veterinarian can let you know what tests are appropriate for your breed, and when a specialist is needed.



Cataracts



Cataracts: Proteins clump in the eye, clouding the lens and leading to blindness. As the lens degrades, inflammation and pain may result.

Treatment: In some cases surgery may be indicated.

Breeds at risk include: Boston Terrier, Siberian Husky, Miniature Poodle, Cocker Spaniel, French Bulldog

Tests: Breeds at risk should get a yearly eye exam from an ophthalmologist. There is a genetic test for *juvenile* cataracts for Boston Terriers, Staffordshire Bull Terriers, and French Bulldogs.

Dry eye (keratoconjunctivitis sicca)

Dry eye: Decreased tear production, which leads to inflammation and irritation of the eye.

Treatment: Daily eye drops are needed. Treatment is life-long.

Breeds at risk include: Cavalier King Charles Spaniel, Pug, West Highland White Terrier, Yorkshire Terrier, Shih Tzu

Tests: Your general practice veterinarian can diagnose dry eye.

Glaucoma

Glaucoma: Increased pressure inside the eye, damaging the retina and optic nerve. Glaucoma is painful and signs include eye discharge and a bulging eye. It usually affects both eyes.

Treatment: Daily medication, pain treatment, and often surgery

Breeds at risk include: Dalmatian, Cocker Spaniel, Poodle, Shar Pei, Beagle, Bull Mastiff, Italian Greyhound, Miniature Pinscher, Miniature Schnauzer

Tests: Glaucoma can be an emergency and a visit with a veterinary ophthalmologist may be recommended. There is no genetic test for the most common form of glaucoma in dogs.



Primary Lens Luxation (PLL)

Primary Lens Luxation: The lens of the eye becomes dislocated. Dogs may have red, teary eyes. PLL is painful and causes blindness.

Treatment: PLL can be an emergency and surgery may be necessary. Some dogs may need daily medication.

Breeds at risk include: Terrier breeds, Australian Cattle Dog, Border Collie, Shar Pei

Tests: Routine eye exams are recommended for at-risk dogs. There is a genetic test for PLL, which can help inform breeding decisions.



Progressive Retinal Atrophy (PRA)

Progressive Retinal Atrophy: A degenerative condition that degrades the cells of the eye. PRA causes blindness but is not painful. Onset usually happens in adult dogs.

Treatment: There is no treatment for PRA.

Breeds at risk include: Cavalier King Charles Spaniel, Labrador and Golden Retriever, Rottweiler, Cocker Spaniel

Tests: Routine eye exams are recommended for at-risk dogs. There are genetic tests for PRA for **some breeds**, which can help inform breeding decisions.

How can I help the dogs in my breeding program?

Screen your breeding dogs for eye disease, especially breeds at higher risk. During your dogs' yearly exams, your veterinarian can let you know if your dogs need further testing. For many breeding dogs, a yearly examination by a board-certified veterinary ophthalmologist is recommended. This allows early detection of progressive eye diseases. Breeding is **not recommended** for dogs diagnosed with the above conditions.

Locate an ophthalmologist near you: www.acvo.org/ophthalmologist-search. We strongly encourage all breeders to register the results of their eye exams with OFA.

Get familiar with the **Blue Book**: ofa.org/diseases/eye-disease/blue-book/

This document has the latest information about canine eye disease organized by breed, and is a valuable resource for any breeder!

Your veterinarian can help you make **breeding decisions** based on your dog's test results. The goal is to reduce the risk of passing on serious eye conditions to puppies and your future breeding dogs.



Information about OFA screening ofa.org/diseases/eye-disease/
Eye disease statistics by breed (OFA): ofa.org/chic-programs/browse-by-breed/