



CONJUNCTIVITIS

Why is My Pet's Eye Red?

A "red eye" is usually inflamed. Eye inflammation can be the result of many different abnormalities. One type of eye inflammation is conjunctivitis, which is an inflammation of the mucous membrane that covers the front portion of the eyeball and lines the third eyelid at the inside corner of the eye and underside of the upper & lower lids.

Conjunctivitis can be primary (e.g., allergic, infectious, environmental, or "dry eye") or secondary to an underlying eye or systemic disease (e.g., glaucoma, uveitis, immunemediated disease, tumors). Many problems can start in one eye and quickly involve the other eye.

Breed Predispositions: Dog breeds predisposed to allergic or immune-mediated skin diseases (e.g., atopy or allergic dermatitis) tend to have more problems with allergic conjunctivitis or dry eye. Purebred cats seem predisposed to infectious viral conjunctivitis.

How Do We Know What Caused It?

The history and physical examination can sometimes tell us what the specific cause is. The signs of conjunctivitis can include: eyelid spasms, eye redness and swollen blood vessels, eye discharges, swelling of the eyelids, and symptoms of upper respiratory infection (in cats). There are a great number of causes of conjunctivitis. These can include: bacterial infection; viral infection (including canine distemper, feline herpes virus or calicivirus), allergic reactions, various immune-mediated conditions, tumors, conditions secondary to the surrounding tissues (like "dry eye" or keratoconjunctivitis sicca, lid diseases such as entropion or ectropion, and extra or abnormal eyelashes, obstruction of the tear drainage duct), foreign bodies, irritation from dust, chemicals, or secondary to other eye diseases (corneal ulcer, deeper inflammation, or glaucoma). Often we will have to perform some diagnostic tests to determine the cause of the inflammation. These tests vary

according to the physical condition of the affected eye and the pet's general health. They may include staining the eye, testing the internal pressure, testing tear production, looking into the eye with an ophthalmoscope, examining discharge under the microscope, and sending blood samples to the laboratory for specific tests.

How Can We Treat It?

Naturally the treatment will vary according to the cause and the resulting eye condition. We try to treat as specifically as possible for each cause.

Some aspects of eye treatment may include:

- Medications may be indicated and frequent reexaminations are often needed to ensure a proper response.
- Some eye diseases may require surgery.
- Some eye diseases may require treatment of the whole pet, not just the eye (i.e. Valley Fever, Distemper, and Ehrlichia).
- If your pet wants to rub its eye, an Elizabethan collar will help to protect the eye.
- Bright light is painful to your pet's eye, so keep it indoors until the eye is normal.

Special Instructions: _____

Your next appointment is _____

Call Us If...

- Your pet's eye(s) appears to be getting worse.
- You notice any degradation in your pet's general health.
- You have trouble giving the prescribed medicine.

Thank you for this opportunity to serve you!