

GLAUCOMA

What is glaucoma?

Glaucoma is an increase in the pressure inside the eye. Glaucoma results from the imbalance of fluid production and fluid drainage within the eye.

How do we determine if your pet has glaucoma?

We can measure the intraocular pressure with a machine called a tonometer and it is a pain-free process.

What causes glaucoma?

The condition can be caused by genetic factors in certain breeds (primary glaucoma) or by a number of other eye diseases which results in glaucoma (secondary glaucoma).

Is my dog at risk?

We may perform a test called gonioscopy which allows us to view the 'drainage angle' within the eye. Some breeds of dog that are prone to glaucoma have an abnormal drainage angle and this may be of importance when deciding on a treatment course or if you are considering breeding. Research continues to improve our knowledge of the disease and breeds with known inherited glaucoma include: Basset Hound, Japanese Shiba Inu, Flat Coated Retriever, Siberian Husky, American Cocker Spaniel, English Cocker Spaniel, English Springer Spaniel, Welsh Springer Spaniel and the Spanish Water Dog. However, there are many other breeds and cross-breeds that can be affected.

What are the presenting signs of glaucoma?

Glaucoma can develop very quickly and all painful 'red' eyes should be tested for the disease. The 'white' of the eye will normally appear pink or red with prominent blood vessels. Often there is increased blinking in the affected eye and there may be excessive tear production. (Tear production is not related to the production of fluid inside the eye). Occasionally the affected eye will be enlarged and the surface of the eye may appear blue or white in colour. Unfortunately glaucoma can result in loss of vision and the patient may be depressed, lethargic, unwilling to eat and collide with objects.



What are the treatment options for glaucoma?

Treatment will depend on a number of factors, including identification of the cause. The aim of any treatment for glaucoma is to control the intraocular pressure, alleviate the pain and preserve vision. In the majority of cases, patients will receive an intensive course of topical medication aimed at reducing the production of fluid inside the eye and improving the outflow of fluid from the eye. Surgical treatment with a laser may need to be considered in cases that are non-responsive to medical management (see Glaucoma Laser Surgery Factsheet). In the majority of cases, both eyes are at risk of glaucoma. If glaucoma has developed in one eye, it is important that the other eye is assessed as soon as possible so that steps can be taken to protect its function.