

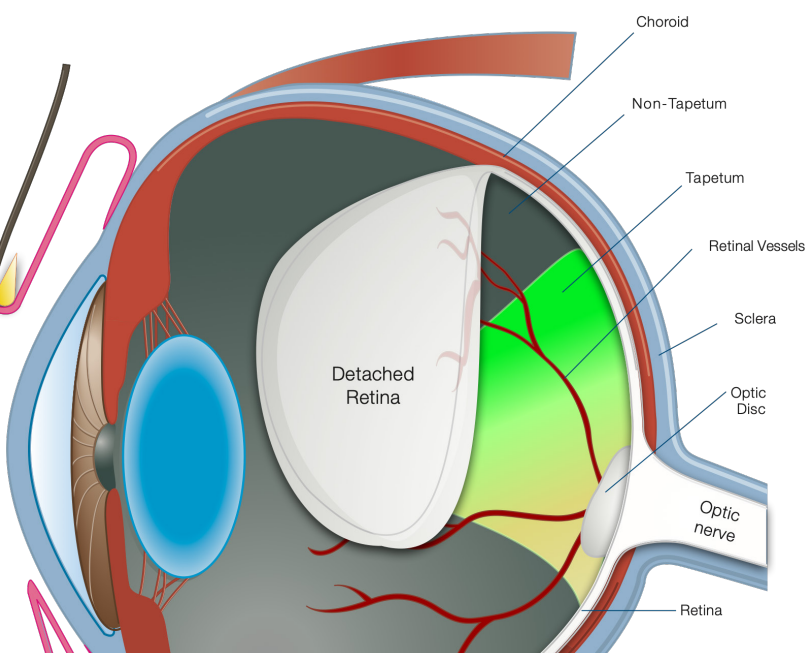
RETINAL SURGERY

What is the retina?

The retina is a very thin tissue at the back of the eye which contains specialised cells (photoreceptors) which can convert light into electrical signals. These electrical signals are passed along nerve fibres through the optic nerve and into the brain for processing. Vision is the interpretation of these electrical signals by the brain.

What is a retinal detachment?

The majority of the very thin retina is only loosely attached to the underlying tissues. The retina is pushed against the underlying tissue by the thick gel-like vitreous. Separation of the retina from the underlying tissue is known as a retinal detachment. For further information regarding this condition please see our Factsheet on Retinal Detachment



What surgical options are available for a retinal detachment?

A full ophthalmic examination will allow us to determine which surgical technique may be appropriate for your pet.

Trans-pupillary laser retinopexy - This non-invasive procedure uses a laser to 'weld' the retina to the underlying tissue and can be used in cases with small retinal abnormalities, tears or a partial detachment.

Complete posterior vitrectomy - This complex surgery requires removal of the gel-like substance behind the lens and repositioning of the retinal tissue with a combination of liquid, gas and oil. We will routinely remove the lens immediately prior to retinal repositioning and replace it with a prosthetic (artificial) lens to prevent secondary cataract formation (see Cataract Surgery Factsheet).

How successful is retinal surgery?

The success rate of retinal surgery in dogs is high with a positive visual outcome in approximately 85% of patients that meet our selection criteria. Not all cases are suitable for surgical intervention and careful ophthalmological assessment is required prior to embarking on an operation. The canine retina will degrade in a detached state, and we always recommend early intervention to increase the chance of replacing viable tissue.

Retinal surgery in dogs is more prone to complications than in people since the canine lens is larger than our own and the canine eye will react more intensely to surgical intervention.

What happens prior to retinal surgery?

Once retinal surgery has been arranged, drops and sometimes tablets will be prescribed, to ensure that there is no inflammation or infection in the eye. Retinal surgery patients can be fed up to and including the evening before the surgery, and water can be left down for them to drink overnight prior to their operation, but they must not be fed on the morning of the operation.

If your dog is diabetic, please do not give them any breakfast on the morning of the surgery and do not administer any insulin. We will monitor blood glucose levels while the patient is with us and we will resume their insulin post-operatively. We ask that owners of diabetic patients bring their dog's insulin, needles (or insulin pen), normal food, and a schedule detailing the daily routine and insulin dosage.

What happens on the day of the operation?

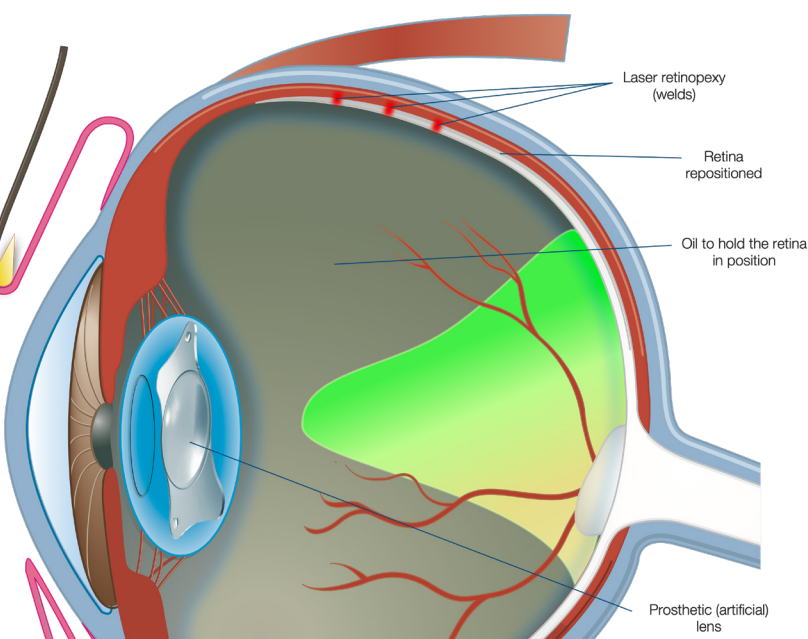
Do not administer medication on the morning of the operation, but please bring it with you to the clinic. We will provide you with an admission time to attend the clinic and you will be required to read and sign a consent form. The patient will be prepared for theatre and given a mild sedation, and we usually operate later in the morning or early in the afternoon. We will telephone you following the surgery and provide further updates during the recovery process.

Our patients are routinely hospitalised overnight, and if we are happy with their progress, they can then return home the following day.

What happens after the operation?

It is normally necessary to apply topical medication to the eye several times per day, and administer oral tablets once or twice daily. All dogs must wear a protective shield ("Elizabethan collar") for a least one week to prevent self-trauma and it is important to avoid vigorous play and exercise.

Patients are re-examined one week post-operatively, and if they are making good progress, a re-examination will be scheduled 4 weeks later. The regularity of the re-examinations will depend on individual factors, and for uncomplicated cases we would expect to assess the patient 1 week, 1 month, and 3 months after surgery. If the patient continues to make good progress then the topical medication will be gradually reduced over time, and we will offer 6 monthly assessments to ensure that we can continue to provide the best possible advice for long-term success.



My pet is insured, how do I make a claim?

If your pet is insured, we will require you to pay for consultation fees and to then claim them back under the insurance. For operations we may be able to arrange a direct claim whereby you do not need to pay at the time and the insurance company pays the fees directly to us. However, direct claims can only be arranged for operations, and can only be processed once the claim form for the initial consultation has been submitted and approved. If you need any assistance regarding insurance, please contact our experienced administration team with your policy details.

If you have any questions regarding retinal surgery please telephone 01768 877255 or email info@veterinaryvision.co.uk