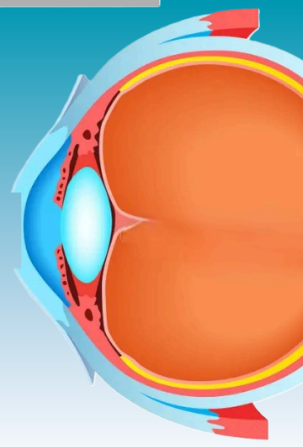




Spontaneous Chronic Corneal Epithelial Defects (SCCEDs)



What is a SCCED?

A corneal ulcer is a break in the outer corneal surface, often caused by trauma, infection, or underlying disease. Ulcers vary in depth depending on their cause, from superficial, where only the outer layer is affected, to deeper ulcers where the some/all of the stroma is lost.

Spontaneous Chronic Corneal Epithelial Defects (SCCEDs) are a specific type of superficial ulcer where the normal healing process becomes disrupted, resulting in an ulcer which can prove slow and frustrating to heal.

Common symptoms of corneal ulcers include:

- Squinting or blinking excessively
- Redness or inflammation of the eye
- Watery or mucoid discharge
- Cloudiness or visible defect on the eye surface
- Rubbing at the face or eye

How is a SCCED diagnosed?

Routine ophthalmic examination of the affected eye should quickly diagnose the condition.

How is a SCCED treated?

1). Medications - E.g. topical antibiotics, lubrications, pain relief – these are essential to help keep the eye comfortable and prevent secondary infection

during the healing response, but are rarely enough to resolve the ulcer on their own.

2). Debridement -Removal of loose or poorly attached epithelial cells to stimulate healing.

3). Grid Keratotomy or Diamond Burr Debridement -Creating tiny scratches in the corneal surface to promote cell adhesion and healing. The majority of ulcers will heal after a single treatment, but some extensive erosions may require repeat procedures. Healing usually takes 2-3 weeks following the procedure.

4). Superficial keratectomy - This is a surgical procedure where the entire corneal ulcer is 'cut out' to leave healthier tissue which should then heal readily. This has the highest success rate of all the treatment options, but necessitates a general anaesthetic and can result in more scarring than other options.

Aftercare - what to expect

Your pet is likely to be discharged with topical and/or oral medications, and possibly a buster collar if required. Re-examination is likely to be requested every 1-3 weeks until the ulceration has resolved. During the healing process the cornea may become red in appearance as blood vessels grow on the normally transparent cornea (a sign of healing). These blood vessels are temporary but can be alarming if not expected!

When to contact us?

Please reach out immediately if:

- Your dog's eye appears to be increasingly painful, red, or cloudy
- You notice an increase in discharge.
- The surface of the cornea appears to become uneven, developing dips, dimples or depressions.

Prognosis

With proper and timely treatment, most SCCEDs heal completely within a matter of weeks, leaving relatively little long-term scarring or compromise.

Key takeaways

SCCEDs are a relatively common type of ulcer, most often seen in certain breeds and age groups, but in general any ulcer which fails to heal as expected should be evaluated for possible SCCED development. These ulcers are likely to be painful, and frustrating to treat, but with early assessment and appropriate treatment they can be resolved relatively early leaving little long-term scarring or consequence.