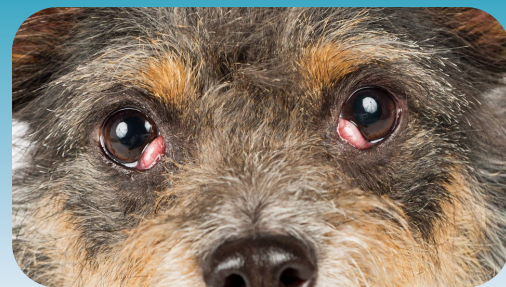


Cherry-eye



What is Cherry Eye?

"Cherry eye" is the common term for a prolapsed gland of the third eyelid. While it can look alarming, it is a highly treatable condition that we regularly manage to ensure your pet's long-term comfort and eye health.

Dogs and cats have a third eyelid (nictitating membrane) that provides extra protection and spreads tears across the eye. Tucked at the base of this eyelid is a vital gland responsible for producing 30% to 60% of the eye's tears.

Cherry eye occurs when the gland moves out of position and "pops out" appearing as a smooth, red or pink fleshy mass in the corner of the eye.

What are the common symptoms?

- A red or pink lump in the inner corner of one or both eyes.
- Increased watery or thick ocular discharge.
- Squinting, pawing or rubbing at the eye due to irritation.

Who is at risk of developing Cherry Eye?

Patients are generally younger at the time of first developing the condition (<2 years of age).

Brachycephalic (flat-faced) breeds are significantly predisposed to developing the condition (x7 more likely). Other at risk breeds include Cocker Spaniels, Great Danes, Beagles and St Bernard.

Why Treatment is Necessary?

While usually not painful at first, an untreated prolapsed gland can lead to serious complications:

- **Infection & Inflammation:** The exposed tissue is prone to conjunctivitis and swelling.
- **Corneal Ulcers:** Rubbing at the irritated eye can cause scratches or ulcers on the eye's surface.
- **Chronic Dry Eye (KCS):** If the gland is exposed for too long, it may stop producing tears, leading to a painful condition requiring lifelong daily medication.

What are the treatment options for Cherry eye?

At View Referrals, our goal is always to preserve the gland to protect tear production.

- **Surgical Repositioning:** This is the gold-standard treatment. We perform a surgical procedure where the gland is repositioned into a tissue “pocket” where it is then held in position and secured with tiny, dissolvable sutures. This procedure has a very high success rate, though in a small number of cases revision surgery may be required, depending on how well your pet heals.
- **Medical Management:** We may prescribe anti-inflammatory and/or antibiotic eye drops to control swelling/infection before surgery, but medication alone rarely provides a permanent resolution.
- **Note on Removal:** Historically, these glands were removed, but this is now strongly discouraged due to the potentially increased risk of “dry eye” developing following such surgery.

What to expect following the surgery?

- **Protective Collar:** Your pet must wear an Elizabethan collar (cone) at all times to prevent rubbing the surgical site, usually for 1-2 weeks after surgery, as any rubbing of the eye may result in surgical complications developing.
- **Activity Restriction:** Avoid running, jumping, or rough play for two weeks after the surgery to keep blood pressure low and optimise the healing process.
- **Harness Over Collar:** Where possible, we recommend use a harness for walks to avoid putting pressure on the neck, which can increase pressure inside/around the eye.
- **Medications:** Administer all prescribed eye drops and oral medications exactly as directed to control inflammation and minimise any discomfort.