

Your Best Friend Can't Say "Ouch" – the importance of annual exams

Today, most aspects of veterinary medicine are geared toward preventative care. It is our goal to provide pets with the longest and highest quality of life possible.

A routine check-up allows your veterinarian to identify or prevent medical conditions early, before they become major problems. Conditions such as dental problems, eye disease and heart disease can be diagnosed early, and many cancers, especially skin cancer, can be detected.

When simple diagnostic lab work is



Five Times –

Pets age at a rate of five to seven times our aging process. So, an annual exam is very important to their well-being.

combined with an annual examination, kidney and liver disease, anemia, and other internal problems can be discovered before any clinical symptoms appear. *Many times pets are sicker internally than they let us know externally, and a simple annual physical could prove to be a life saver.*

Dog and cat breeds that have a predisposition to glaucoma



Dog Breeds

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------------------|
| Afghan | Miniature Pinscher |
| Akita | Norfolk Terrier |
| Alaskan Malamute | Norwegian Elkhound |
| Basset Hound | Norwich Terrier |
| Beagle | Poodle |
| Border Collie | Saluki |
| Boston Terrier | Samoyed |
| Bouvier | Scottish Terrier |
| Cairn Terrier | Sealyham Terrier |
| Chihuahua | Shih Tzu |
| Chow | Siberian Husky |
| Cocker Spaniel | Smooth Coat Fox Terrier |
| Corgi | Tibetan Terrier |
| Dachshund | Welsh Springer |
| Dalmatian | Welsh Terrier |
| Dandie Terrier | West Highland |
| English Springer | Whippet |
| Giant Schnauzer | Wired-Hair Fox Terrier |
| Great Dane | |
| Maltese | |
| Manchester Terrier | |

Cat Breeds

- Persians Siamese

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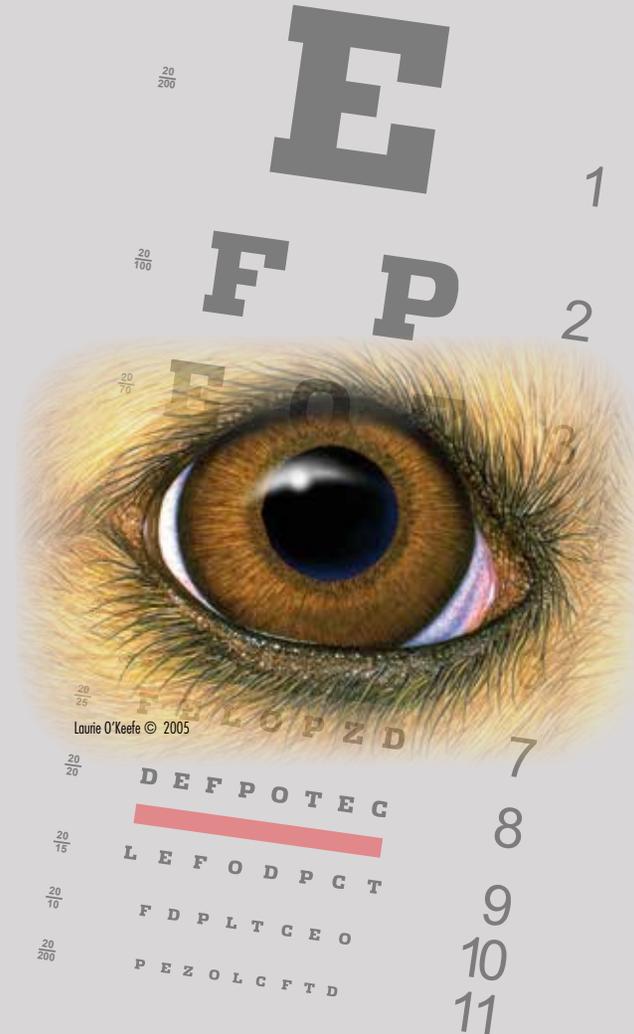
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eye disease Glaucoma

the major cause of blindness in pets



annual physical exams can help identify hidden health problems

Early detection is the only way of controlling glaucoma

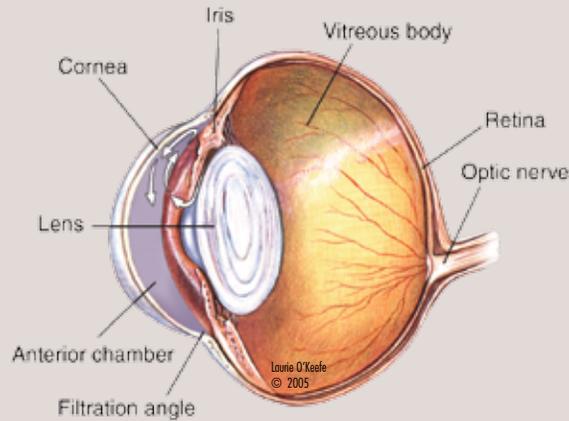


What is glaucoma?

Glaucoma is the leading cause of blindness in dogs and is caused by increased fluid pressure in the eye, or intraocular pressure.

The fluid inside the eyeball is called the **humor**. Since there are no blood vessels going to the **cornea** and **lens** of the eye, it is the job of the humor to supply them with nutrients and oxygen. There are cells called the ciliary body, that produce this fluid inside the eyeball. These fluids drain out of the eyeball where the cornea meets the **iris**, the iridocorneal angle.

With glaucoma, the fluid does not drain correctly from the eye, and as a result, the pressure of the humor rises. Sometimes the rise in fluid pressure can happen very quickly, in a matter of hours. Sometimes it builds slowly over time. **In either case, the abnormally high pressure causes damage to the retina and the optic nerve, leading to blindness.** Timely diagnosis and treatment of glaucoma can save your pet pain, suffering and possibly blindness.



Two types of glaucoma

Primary Glaucoma is inherited. This means that some breeds of dogs and cats have physical or physiological traits that predispose them to developing glaucoma. **Primary glaucoma doesn't usually develop until a dog is 2-3 years old, or older.** Glaucoma rarely occurs in both eyes at the same time and can take months or even years for the second eye to be affected.

Secondary Glaucoma occurs when other eye diseases or injuries cause decreased fluid drainage. Some common causes of secondary glaucoma are inflammation inside the eye, bleeding in the eye, or dislocation of the lens.

Glaucoma warning signs

It is important to recognize glaucoma as early as possible. The faster treatment is started, the greater the chance of saving vision in the affected eye.

- **pain – can be characterized by loss of appetite and depression, or pawing at the eye**
- **a dilated pupil**
- **cloudiness within the cornea**
- **red or bloodshot eye**
- **loss of vision**

Diagnose & Treatment

Diagnosing glaucoma

Annual screening exams are recommended, especially for those pets that have a predisposition for eye disease.

Glaucoma is diagnosed by measuring the **intraocular pressure** with a **tonometer**. This is usually done with local anesthetic drops placed in your dog's eye.

Treating glaucoma

There are three goals to treatment of glaucoma, depending on the cause:

- 1) **Reduction in the intraocular pressure**
- 2) **Reduction in the amount of aqueous humor that is produced**
- 3) **Increase in the drainage**

Medical Therapy

There are several different types of eye drops and pills that help decrease fluid production or increase fluid drainage from the eye. These medications can help, but they usually do not control glaucoma for the long term. They can help prevent or delay the onset of glaucoma, and can work as a temporary treatment until surgery can be performed in the affected eye.

Surgical Therapy

The choice of surgical procedures for glaucoma will depend on whether the eye can still see. For visual eyes, the goal of surgery is to decrease the production of fluid in the eye, and to improve the drainage from the eye. There are a few different methods that a veterinary ophthalmologist can use to achieve this. If the eye is irretrievably blind, it can be removed or modified with a prosthesis. In either case, your dog or cat will no longer experience the pain the glaucoma.