

# Dry Eye/ Keratoconjunctivitis Sicca

## What is keratoconjunctivitis sicca?

Keratoconjunctivitis sicca is the term used for insufficient tear production

## Why does it matter, if my pet has insufficient tear production?

The tear film has several very important functions, such as providing the surface of the eye with oxygen and nutrients, lubricating the surface of the eye, fighting infection on the surface of the eye etc. If the tear film is lacking your pet will be predisposed to the development of diseases of the surface of the eye (cornea), not to mention the discomfort it causes.

## What causes this disease?

There are several causes of dry eye disease, including problems with the innervation of the glands producing the tear film, hormonal imbalances, reactions to certain drugs, and immune mediated causes (abnormal behaviour of the body's own defence mechanisms).

## Can both eyes be affected?

Yes, we commonly see this disease as a bilateral condition.

## Are any breeds predisposed?

Yes, we commonly see dry eye disease in Cavalier King Charles Spaniels, English Bulldogs, Lhasa Apsos, Shih Tzus, West Highland White Terriers, Pugs, etc.

## What treatment options do I have?

Most cases respond well to medical treatment, which is usually a combination of tear stimulating and tear replacing substituting medications. In some cases local anti-inflammatory and antibiotic drugs are required. Most cases require life- long treatment to some degree. Cases which don't respond to medical treatment may require surgery to provide constant lubrication to the surface of the eye. Surgery includes redirecting saliva from the mouth to the lower eyelid. Although saliva does not have the same quality as tear film, it does provide instant moisture to the surface of the eye, relieving signs of discomfort. However there are several other surgical treatment options for surgery, tailored to the specific needs of your pet.

## What happens if I do nothing?

If left untreated, dry eye will cause constant discomfort and ultimately result in corneal ulcers, which may result in loss of vision or loss of the eye. Humans suffering with dry eye disease report severe discomfort. We can only assume your pet feels the same.



Schirmer tear test



Dog with chronic KCS



Close up KCS eye

## Want to know more?

If you have any further questions regarding this or any other condition feel free to ask us during the consultation, or contact us:

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