

# Client Education Sheet: Dry Eye (Keratoconjunctivitis Sicca) in Dogs



## WHAT IS DRY EYE?

DRY EYE, ALSO KNOWN AS KERATOCONJUNCTIVITIS SICCA (KCS), IS A CONDITION WHERE A DOG'S TEAR GLANDS DO NOT PRODUCE ENOUGH TEARS TO KEEP THE EYES PROPERLY LUBRICATED. TEARS ARE ESSENTIAL FOR MAINTAINING EYE HEALTH, REMOVING DEBRIS, AND PREVENTING INFECTIONS. WITHOUT ADEQUATE TEARS, THE EYES BECOME DRY, IRRITATED, AND MORE PRONE TO DAMAGE.

## CAUSES OF DRY EYE

- IMMUNE-MEDIATED DESTRUCTION OF TEAR GLANDS (MOST COMMON CAUSE)
- CONGENITAL CONDITIONS (SOME BREEDS ARE BORN WITH FEWER TEAR GLANDS)
- CERTAIN MEDICATIONS (E.G., SULFA DRUGS, ATROPINE)
- NEUROLOGICAL DISORDERS AFFECTING TEAR PRODUCTION
- VIRAL INFECTIONS (E.G., CANINE DISTEMPER)
- SURGICAL REMOVAL OF THE THIRD EYELID GLAND (CHERRY EYE SURGERY COMPLICATIONS)
- TRAUMA OR INJURY TO THE EYE AREA

## SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- RED, IRRITATED EYES
- THICK, YELLOW OR GREEN EYE DISCHARGE
- FREQUENT BLINKING OR SQUINTING
- DRY, DULL, OR CLOUDY APPEARANCE OF THE CORNEA
- EXCESSIVE PAWING OR RUBBING OF THE EYES
- RECURRENT EYE INFECTIONS OR ULCERS

## BREEDS PRONE TO DRY EYE

- CAVALIER KING CHARLES SPANIEL, COCKER SPANIEL, WEST HIGHLAND WHITE TERRIER, BULLDOG, PUG
- SHIH TZU, LHASA APSO

**SCAN THE QR CODE TO SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT WITH OUR VETERINARY OPHTHALMOLOGIST AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.**



## DIAGNOSIS:

YOUR VETERINARIAN WILL PERFORM A SCHIRMER TEAR TEST (STT) TO MEASURE TEAR PRODUCTION. ADDITIONAL TESTS, SUCH AS FLUORESCEIN STAINING TO CHECK FOR CORNEAL ULCERS AND INTRAOCULAR PRESSURE TESTING, MAY BE RECOMMENDED TO ASSESS OVERALL EYE HEALTH.

## TREATMENT OPTIONS

TREATMENT FOR DRY EYE IS LIFELONG AND AIMS TO RESTORE EYE MOISTURE AND REDUCE INFLAMMATION. OPTIONS INCLUDE:

- ARTIFICIAL TEAR SUBSTITUTES: LUBRICATING EYE DROPS OR GELS TO KEEP THE EYES MOIST.
- IMMUNOMODULATORY MEDICATIONS: CYCLOSPORINE OR TACROLIMUS TO STIMULATE TEAR PRODUCTION AND REDUCE INFLAMMATION.
- ANTIBIOTICS OR ANTI-INFLAMMATORY DROPS: USED TO TREAT SECONDARY INFECTIONS AND REDUCE DISCOMFORT.
- SURGICAL OPTIONS: IN SEVERE CASES, A SURGICAL PROCEDURE CALLED PAROTID DUCT TRANSPOSITION (REDIRECTING SALIVA TO THE EYE) MAY BE CONSIDERED.

## PROGNOSIS

WITH PROPER TREATMENT, MOST DOGS WITH DRY EYE CAN LIVE COMFORTABLY AND MAINTAIN GOOD VISION. HOWEVER, UNTREATED DRY EYE CAN LEAD TO CHRONIC PAIN, CORNEAL ULCERS, AND POTENTIAL BLINDNESS. EARLY DIAGNOSIS AND CONSISTENT MANAGEMENT ARE KEY TO PRESERVING YOUR DOG'S EYE HEALTH.

## HOME CARE AND MANAGEMENT

- ADMINISTER MEDICATIONS AS PRESCRIBED BY YOUR VETERINARIAN.
- KEEP THE EYES CLEAN BY GENTLY WIPING AWAY DISCHARGE WITH A DAMP CLOTH.
- USE A HUMIDIFIER IN YOUR HOME TO HELP MAINTAIN MOISTURE LEVELS.
- SCHEDULE REGULAR VETERINARY CHECK-UPS TO MONITOR EYE HEALTH AND TREATMENT EFFECTIVENESS.