

Keratoconjunctivitis Sicca

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Overview

Keratoconjunctivitis sicca (KCS) is a Latin medical term used to describe a condition of decreased tear production. The term technically means "inflammation of the cornea and conjunctiva from drying." When the watery part of the tears is not produced in adequate amounts, the eye becomes chronically inflamed, and scarring and pigmentation of the cornea may lead to decrease vision. Another commonly used term to describe this disease is "dry eye."

Numerous dog breeds are at risk for developing KCS including the West Highland white terrier, English bulldog, pug, shih tzu, American cocker spaniel, Lhasa apso and Pekingese.

If left untreated, KCS is a potentially vision threatening disease. It may lead to painful corneal ulcerations in the acute stage of the disease. In chronic KCS, vision may be impaired because of scarring of the cornea.

Diagnosis and Treatment Notes:

- Keratoconjunctivitis sicca is generally diagnosed by physical examination findings, a Schirmer tear test to determine the amount of tears produced and fluorescein staining of the eye to detect any underlying corneal ulcers.
- Treatment depends on the severity of the disease, your individual pet, and your veterinarian. Most dogs with KCS benefit from cyclosporine ointment applied daily to the eyes. Some dogs are prescribed artificial tear ointment or solution or antibiotic eye medication. Keeping the eye lubricated is crucial. Discuss treatment details when your pet is diagnosed with this condition.

What to Watch for*:

- Chronic redness of the eye
- Chronic thick, yellow-green discharge, especially in the morning
- Development of a film over the cornea
- Decreased vision in predisposed breeds

**Please notify us if you notice any of the above signs or if you have any questions!*

