

Eye Discharge in Dogs

The causes and treatments of a dog's eye discharge.

CAUSES OF EYE DISCHARGE

Congenital/Inherited disorders: Entropion, ectropion, distichiasis, imperforate lacrimal puncta, deficiency of tear-producing tissue, hypertrophy and prolapse of nictitating membrane ("cherry eye"), keratoconjunctivitis sicca ("dry eye"), corneal dystrophy (a condition that causes recurring corneal ulcers), or uveitis.

Irritation/Inflammation: Of the eye itself and/or surrounding tissues (conjunctivitis).

Infectious diseases: Distemper, infectious hepatitis, leptospirosis, secondary bacterial infections, or fungal infections (histoplasmosis, coccidioidomycosis, aspergillosis).

Foreign bodies: Corneal, scleral, or conjunctival.

Trauma: Corneal ulcers and other injuries, facial trauma causing eye injury or damage to tear-producing glands, removal of or damage to tear-producing gland during surgery for "cherry eye."

Parasites/Parasite-borne diseases: Ehrlichiosis, Rocky Mountain spotted fever, borreliosis (Lyme disease).

Allergies

Drug reaction: Exposure to oral sulfa-containing antibiotics, topical atropine, or topical anesthetics, all of which can cause keratoconjunctivitis ("dry eye").

Immune-mediated diseases: Keratoconjunctivitis ("dry eye") or uveitis.

Endocrine disorders: Hyperadrenocorticism (Cushing's disease) or hypothyroidism.

Tumors: In eye or nasal passages.

What to do: Eye discharge may or may not be an emergency, depending on severity, cause, and other signs of illness. Contact your veterinarian or emergency clinic immediately for specific advice about your dog's situation.

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Have a health question about your dog? Ask our vet expert or ask other dog owners on our forums.