

## Juvenile Cataracts

**Several dog breeds are known to be prone to this eye condition.**

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Juvenile cataracts are a common hereditary condition in many breeds of dogs. Some juvenile-onset cataracts are the "dissolving" type, while others lead to total and irreversible clouding of the lens. In the dissolving type, with time and the use of cortisone drops the lenses will become clear again and vision will be restored. In the nondissolving form, an ophthalmologist examines the dog to make sure the retinas are normal and then considers surgically removing the cataracts.

Because juvenile cataracts are a known hereditary condition, it is important to buy a puppy of a cataract-prone breed from stock that is checked clear. Responsible breeders have their breeding animals checked every year by a certified ophthalmologist. Many breeds are known to be prone to this condition, including Cocker Spaniels, all varieties of Poodles, Siberian Huskies, Alaskan Malamutes, Boston Terriers, Dachshunds, English Toy Spaniels, Great Danes, Old English Sheepdogs, Schnauzers, Pekingese, Vizslas and West Highland White Terriers.

Some kennel clubs hold annual eye clinics to offer breeders a local and reasonably priced opportunity to have their dogs checked.

Old-age cataracts occur in a large percentage of older dogs of all breeds, and this has no relationship to the incidence of juvenile cataracts. While your dog may develop geriatric cataracts in six or seven years, it is no more likely to do so based on the fact that it has had juvenile cataracts than a dog that did not.