

EYELASH DISORDERS

TRICHIASIS is hair that is growing from a normal site but it is coming in contact with the cornea (clear portion at the front of the eye) or conjunctiva (pink tissue around the eye). Signs include excessive blinking and squinting, watery discharge, +/- pigmentation on the surface of the cornea.

DISTICHIA are small hairs (“cilia”) that are growing on the inner surface of the eyelid margin from or near the glands on the lids known as “meibomian glands”. These cilia may or may not come in contact with the cornea. Most dogs with distichia do not show any sign of discomfort. However, if the hairs are stiff and rubbing on the cornea, the dog will show signs such as excessive blinking and squinting, watery discharge, +/- pigmentation or ulceration of the cornea.

ECTOPIC CILIA are single or multiple hairs that grow on the inside of the eyelid, several millimeters from the lid margin, most commonly near the middle of the upper lid. Signs include pain, watery discharge, and severe squinting and blinking. Ectopic cilia often cause ulcers on the cornea which are resistant to healing until the cilia is removed. Ectopic cilia are very painful.

WHAT IS THE CAUSE OF THESE CONDITIONS?

Eyelash disorders are related to breed disposition or facial conformation. Eyelash disorders are common in dogs but rare in cats. These problems are most often seen in young dogs. Any breed can be affected, although some breeds are predisposed:

- Breeds with pronounced facial folds such as the Pekingese, Bulldog, and Pug can have trichiasis.
- Many Cocker Spaniels and Weimeraners have distichia.
- Ectopic cilia are common in the Shih Tzu, Dachshund, Lhasa Apso, Sheltie, and others.

WHAT IS THE TREATMENT FOR THESE CONDITIONS?

TRICHIASIS can occasionally be managed conservatively by keeping the hair on the face clipped, however, this may cause the offending hairs to become stiffer and even more irritating. Various surgical procedures can be performed depending on the situation:

Facial fold removal

Removal of the hairs by laser

Removal of the skin from which the hair is growing

Injections of collagen to roll the offending area away from the eye (temporary - lasts 6-8 months/injection)

DISTICHIASIS is only treated if it is irritating the eye. The hair follicles are individually destroyed with a laser and the hair is removed. **Additional treatments may be required in the future as some follicles on the lid may have been dormant and not**

growing hair at the time of the initial treatment.

ECTOPIC CILIA are removed by surgically cutting out the hair and follicle, then lasering the area to destroy any remnants of the follicle. **The cilia will not re-grow from the same site, but there is a risk of other dormant follicles growing cilia at other sites in either eye in the future.**

WHAT WILL I NEED TO DO AT HOME?

- Give medications as directed. If you are required to use drops as well as ointment, apply the ointment last as it forms a greasy barrier, preventing the drops from absorbing well.
- Depending on the procedure performed, your pet may need to wear a plastic head collar to prevent rubbing at the eye. Keep this collar on at all times, even at night.
- Clean any discharge from the eye with a moist Kleenex or soft cloth.
- Recheck here when advised so we can closely monitor your pet's progress.
- Call us if you have any questions or concerns.

