

GLAUCOMA

Glaucoma is a condition resulting in an increased fluid pressure within the eyeball and is a common cause of blindness in both dogs and cats. Glaucoma can be very painful!

Glaucoma is a disease that has been diagnosed in 42 breeds of dogs and several breeds of cats. Any mixed breed dog or cat containing these breeds is also susceptible. Since early detection is important to prevent blindness, routine screening for glaucoma should be initiated once pets reach adulthood and continued for the rest of their life each year at the time of the comprehensive physical examination. **EARLY DETECTION IS THE ONLY WAY OF CONTROLLING GLAUCOMA!**

Normal pressure within the eye is a result of a balance between the production of aqueous humor (fluid in the anterior chamber of the eye) and the continuous drainage of the fluid. If too much fluid is produced or if the fluid's exit is decreased or blocked, the internal pressure of the eye can rise to dangerous levels, which is known as "glaucoma."

EXCESSIVE PRESSURE IN THE EYE FLUID CAN PERMANENTLY DESTROY THE EYE. The pressure destroys the retina and causes permanent damage to other vital structures within the eye. The outward appearance of the eye can appear enlarged if glaucoma persists for a long period of time.

There are many causes of glaucoma including birth defects, inflammatory conditions, eye injuries, lens disorders, blockage of the pupil, and tumors.

Once one eye is affected, it often occurs in the other eye. It is very important for the pet's owner to watch for signs that the other eye is affected.

HOW IS GLAUCOMA TREATED?

1. Hospitalization is often required to stabilize the condition.
2. First priority is given to reducing the pressure, which will also relieve the intense pain that can occur. Early treatment is critical to save vision.
3. Medications are the first line of treatment, but sometimes surgery is required.
4. Frequent rechecks and eye pressure readings are required to monitor therapy.