



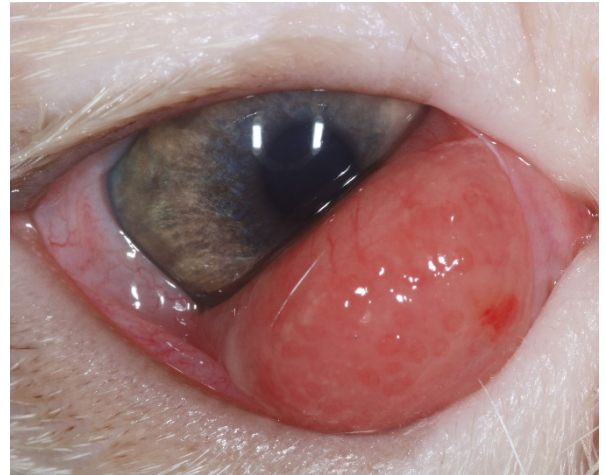
Cherry Eye in Dogs

What is Cherry Eye?

Cherry eye refers to the prolapse (or "popping out") of the **third eyelid gland** (also known as the nictitans gland), which is located in the inner corner of your dog's eye *behind* the third eyelid.

Cherry eye is more common in certain dog breeds, including Bulldogs and Great Danes, although it can occur in any breed. There is a genetic predisposition and they occur where there is laxity of the supporting connective tissues in the area.

While cherry eye itself doesn't usually cause pain, the displacement of the third eyelid gland can lead to other problems, such as discharge from the eye, imperfect spreading of the tear film across the eye when blinking, or more importantly reduction in the production of the tears which over time, can lead to serious Dry Eye Disease (keratoconjunctivitis sicca, KCS)



Treatment Options for Cherry Eye

Treatment aims to surgically replace the prolapsed gland to its normal position and prevent it from reappearing. This importantly restores normal tear production from the gland.

1. Surgical Treatment (Most Common):

- **Gland repositioning:** The most effective and commonly performed surgery for cherry eye is to reposition the gland back into place. This is done under general anesthesia, and the gland is sutured in place to prevent further prolapse.
- **Removal of the gland:** The gland is only removed if severely damaged or has a tumour. The third eyelid gland plays an important role in producing tears, and removal increases the risk of **dry eye** (KCS).

2. Medical Management:

- **Lubricants** or anti-inflammatories might be used prior to surgery.
- **Conservative management:** Although this can help manage symptoms, medical treatment alone generally does not correct the underlying prolapse of the gland.

Prognosis

The prognosis for dogs with cherry eye is generally very good when treated surgically. Most dogs recover well from the procedure, and the gland is able to function normally once repositioned. However, some dogs may experience a recurrence of cherry eye, if sutures dissolve prematurely due to trauma or infection. Surgical replacement can be repeated. If the gland is removed (in rare cases), there is a higher risk of developing **dry eye** (keratoconjunctivitis sicca), which requires lifelong management.

