

# CATARACT SURGERY PHACOEMULSIFICATION

## WHAT IS A CATARACT?

A cataract is an opacity within the lens; the lens sits behind the pupil and helps focus images onto the retina. Whilst early cataracts may not cause visual problems, progression can result in complete loss of vision. Cataracts can occur as a result of genetic disease, old age, inflammation, diabetes or trauma.

## SURGICAL OPTIONS

Without surgery, the eye will remain blind and may develop serious and painful problems such as inflammation and glaucoma. If both eyes are affected, it may be best to have them done together as this reduces anaesthetic time and financial costs. If the cataracts develop at different stages, we can discuss the pros and cons of doing one eye vs two with you.

## WHAT CAN BE DONE?

- ✓ Cataracts can only be removed with surgery, this is called phacoemulsification.
- ✓ This process breaks down the lens into fragments which can then be removed.
- ✓ A synthetic lens is placed in most patients to improve post-operative focusing

## WILL THE CATARACT GROW BACK

Cataract regrowth is very rare in dogs. Scarring can develop within the lens capsule which may cause reduced vision; this is common in younger dogs. Precautions are taken to minimise this risk. A small number of animals may need surgery to remove these.

## POST OP CARE

Antibiotics and anti-inflammatories will be prescribed post surgery, along with frequent daily eye drops. Initially, this is usually between 14-24 applications per day. A buster collar will be required for at least 2 weeks post-surgery to prevent your dog from rubbing their eye and causing further discomfort. The eye drops will gradually reduce over a period of 2 months or so, if treatment is stopped early this can cause irreversible damage; some patients require lifelong eye drops. Off-lead exercise and vigorous play are not recommended until we're happy everything has settled. A harness is recommended to prevent pressure around the neck which can raise eye pressure. We will perform regular reviews at generally 1 week; 3 weeks; 2 months; 4 months and then 6-12 months for life. Reviews can be more frequent if complications occur.

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## SUCCESS RATES

- ✓ Success is defined as maintenance of vision at 6 months post surgery.
- ✓ 90-95% per eye at 6 months.  
80-85% per eye at 3 years.
- ✓ 5-10% have complications which may require long term management.
- ✓ Rarely, severe complications may lead to loss of vision, or loss of the eye.

## COMPLICATIONS

- Inflammation: All patients will have some inflammation after surgery for which we provide anti-inflammatory drops. Every patient experiences different levels of inflammation.
- Glaucoma (increased intra-ocular pressure): This is not common and can mostly be managed with eye drops. It can be painful or cause blindness, and further surgery may be required.
- Retinal Detachment: Very rarely, the retina can detach causing vision loss. Surgery can be performed to correct this.
- Infection inside the eye: Very rare, but difficult to treat and usually results in the loss of the eye.
- Corneal Oedema: This is often managed with eye drops
- Other, less common complications may occur and can be discussed if needed.

## WE ARE HERE FOR YOU

We understand that your pets health is extremely important, and it can be very worrying when they are unwell.

We are here to listen and support you.  
Please get in touch with any concerns you may have.

## ANY QUESTIONS?

Do not hesitate to contact us.

Call us on: 012433888091

Email us on: [advice@optivet.com](mailto:advice@optivet.com)

Visit our website: [www.optivet.com](http://www.optivet.com)

