

PROGRESSIVE RETINAL ATROPHY (PRA)

WHAT IS PRA?

Progressive retinal atrophy is a degenerative disease of the retina; the layer at the back of the eye responsible for vision. This is a progressive disease leading to irreversible blindness. PRA is not a painful condition.

WHAT CAUSES PRA?

PRA is an inherited disease largely reported in purebred dogs, but is also seen in mixed breeds. The age of onset varies with the breed affected, with some demonstrating clinical signs within their first year of life. Most commonly, dogs start to show signs between 3-6 years.

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS OF PRA?

Your dog's vision usually becomes worse in dim light conditions and night-time. Your dog may become nervous at night and reluctant to enter dark rooms or go outside in low light. As the disease progresses, daytime vision becomes impaired and dogs can bump into unfamiliar objects. You may notice increased "eye shine"; the pupil will appear more dilated and the eye will have a brighter reflection when the dog looks at the light. Cataracts are a common secondary complication seen with PRA.

DIAGNOSIS

- ✓ Gradual decrease in vision. Some dogs adapt quickly to vision loss and are not diagnosed until the condition is advanced.
- ✓ An ophthalmic exam will detect retinal degeneration, however it can be difficult to provide a definitive diagnosis.
- ✓ An electroretinogram (ERG) can detect the response of the retina to light, it can be used when the retina is obscured by a cataract or when early changes are not yet evident.
- ✓ A genetic test may be performed to identify some forms of PRA, but this is not available for every gene.

TREATMENT

There is no effective treatment for PRA, and your dog will progressively lose their vision. However, dogs are amazingly adaptable and can cope well without their sight. Please request a copy of our additional handout "Living with a Blind Dog" for more information. We understand this can be tough, and we are here to support you and your pet.

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ALTERNATIVE TREATMENTS

You may read about a nutritional supplement called 'Ocu-Glo' that the manufacturers claim slows the progression of PRA and cataract. There is very limited evidence for this, but anti-oxidants have been shown to be beneficial in human retinal diseases (like age-related macular degeneration), so they may be helpful and are unlikely to do your pet any harm if you would like to trial them.

ANY QUESTIONS?

Do not hesitate to contact us.

Call us on: 012433888091

Email us on: advice@optivet.com

Visit our website: www.optivet.com

WE ARE HERE FOR YOU

At Optivet, we understand how important your pet is to you, and how hard it can be when they lose their sight. If you would like emotional support during this difficult time, please reach out, our Emotional Support Advisor Sam is here to help. Many of our staff have blind pets, and are happy to share their stories.



Author: Gisela Escalada Caliz
DVM, MRCVS

Designed by: Samantha Lympny-Tier
MSc BSc (Hons) PTLLS