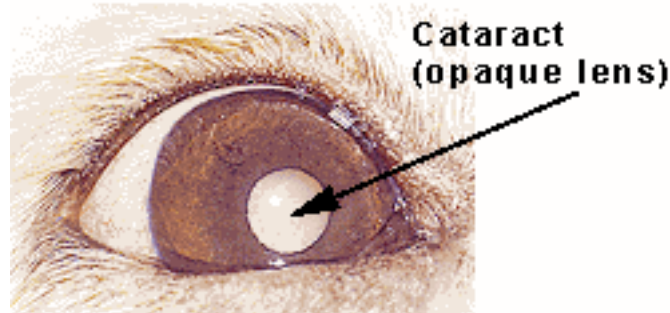




CAYMAN ANIMAL HOSPITAL

Cataracts

A cataract is the loss of transparency (opacity) of the lens due to changes in the structure of the lens proteins. Cataracts occur with aging, but may also be caused by other factors.



Eye with Cataract

Cataracts are common in dogs, particularly in purebreds. Inherited cataracts are the most common types. These cataracts are usually bilateral (occur in both eyes) and appear early in life. Many breeds are predisposed to cataracts; however, they are most commonly encountered in miniature schnauzers.

Traumatic injury to the eye is another important cause of cataracts. This type of cataract occurs secondary to intraocular inflammation or lens luxation.

In dogs, acquired cataracts that appear later in life are often the result of metabolic problems. Dogs with diabetes mellitus typically develop bilateral rapidly progressing cataracts. These cataracts appear quickly and often lead to complete blindness. Once the cataracts form, there is no medical treatment to reverse the process.

Prevention

- Animals with inherited cataracts should not be used for breeding.
- Breeding animals should be examined yearly by a veterinary ophthalmologist for the presence of cataracts and other inherited eye diseases (retinal problems).
- Puppies and kittens fed exclusively formula should receive a more balanced and complete diet.
- Injuries to the eye should be treated as medical emergencies. If treated early, many inflammatory and traumatic injuries will not result in cataracts.



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Normal Canine Eye

Nuclear sclerosis is a normal aging change that results from compaction and hardening of the lens fibers



A cataract is an opacity of the lens fibers or capsule



Nuclear Sclerosis vs Cataracts