

Cataracts in Dogs and Cats

A clouding of the eye's transparent lens is called a cataract. Just like in humans, cataracts are also common in pets. Typical causes for cataracts in **dogs** include genetic abnormalities, diabetes, old age, chronic eye infections or inflammation, trauma, nutritional deficiencies and radiation exposure. The cause of cataracts in **cats** is usually a type of eye inflammation called chronic anterior uveitis.

Much like a smudge on a pair of glasses, a cloudy area on the eye's lens impedes vision. When the problem first starts to develop, it may be small and not impact the pet's vision very much but as the clouding progresses, it becomes thicker and denser. Eventually the pet may go completely blind.

Further complications occur when the cloudy areas detach the lens and damage the delicate structures of the eye. This can cause pressure to build behind the eye and can lead to glaucoma and permanent blindness.

Symptoms:

Symptoms in both cats and dogs typically relate to the degree of vision impairment because the pupils will be cloudy in one or both of the eyes. Pets with less than 30% lens opacity will display little or no symptoms. Pets with more than 60% opacity of the lens may suffer from vision loss or have difficulty seeing in dim or low light. Subsequent vision loss may cause your pet to frequently bump into walls, trip, misjudge distances or not recognize familiar people.

Treatment:

The only realistic treatment in **Dogs** with cataracts is surgery by a specialist. The goal of surgery is to restore vision and prevent secondary issues which could develop such as glaucoma and detached retinas.

Without treatment most dogs with cataracts will lose vision in the affected eye.

With surgical correction 90% to 95% of pets will restore their sight to near normal.