

# Dry Eye



## What is it?

Dry eye (Keratoconjunctivitis Sicca/KCS) is a condition where either not enough tears are produced, or the tears themselves are of poor quality and evaporate too quickly. This causes the eye to 'dry out' which can cause pain, discomfort, infections, corneal ulcers, and potentially permanent damage.

## What causes it?

Dry eye is a common problem in dogs. The most common form of Dry Eye is immune-mediated, which means the immune system mistakenly attacks and shuts down the cells responsible for tear production.

## How is it treated?

Dry eye is a chronic condition that can be managed but not cured. Eye drops are used to suppress the immune system and prevent it from attacking the tear-producing cells. This helps improve tear production. However, it is extremely important to understand that these drops are needed to be given for life. Stopping the medication can cause dry eye symptoms to return. The eye medication is specially formulated by a veterinary compounding pharmacist. In some cases, an artificial tear lubricant may also be required.

## What to expect after starting treatment?

It is important that this condition is diagnosed and treatment started as soon as possible as treatment tends to be much more successful the earlier this condition is recognised. It can take up to 8 weeks for a response to be seen. The tear production will need to be monitored and treated for the entire life of the patient.

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