

Eye Care for Dogs

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Your dog does not have a safe, effective way of keeping its eyes clean. Rubbing against carpeting or furniture, or trying to remove buildup with paws that have nails, are ineffective and unsafe ways to keep this critical area clean. You have to provide this important part of his health care. During your weekly health maintenance check, position yourself in good light and look closely at your dog's eyes.



Healthy eyes of dogs are moist and clear. If there is redness or swelling, or if your dog squints or you see a discharge of mucus, these may be indications of an eye infection. Monitor your dog's eyes closely and do not hesitate to contact your veterinarian if you suspect something is wrong. Your dog's eyes are too valuable to take any chances.

If you have an older dog and her eyes appear a bit hazy or opaque it may be normal. This can be a normal change due to aging. Your veterinarian will be able to distinguish if this is age-related clouding which is called 'nuclear sclerosis,' or if it is caused by [cataracts](#).

To properly care for your dog's eyes, be sure to:

- Keep all hair out of your dog's eyes since scratches to the cornea (the clear membrane across the surface of the eye) can result from contact with hair. Trim the hair using only blunt-nosed scissors, cutting parallel to the edge of the eyelid. This is especially important where the skin folds near the eyes in breeds like Pekingese, Lhasa Apso, and Maltese.
- Keep eyes clear of mucus at all times. Infections are often caused by bacteria that overgrow on mucus. Use a sterile eyewash and/or eye wipes to keep eye area clean.
- Apply a protective ophthalmic ointment under the top lid to protect the eyes before bathing, facial cleanings, and insecticide treatment. Even 'tearless' shampoos can irritate if too much gets in the eyes or if it is not rinsed out soon enough.
- 'Tear staining' is a common problem with particular breeds of dogs (e.g., Poodles and Cocker Spaniels), and can get unsightly if not taken care of. Tears are bactericidal, which means they kill the bacteria that can cause infections of the eye. Normally, tears flow across the surface of the eye and quickly drain through the tear duct. This discoloration at the corners of the eyes is caused by normal tears that spill out and lay on the surrounding hair. For breeds that tend to have tear or saliva stains, you could clean hair in affected areas at least weekly with a tear stain remover product.

