



## Keratoconjunctivitis Sicca (KCS) or "Dry Eye"

Keratoconjunctivitis Sicca, (KCS), or "dry eye" is a fairly common disease of the tear producing glands of the eye. There can be a variety of causes, but the most common one is an immune system disorder. For unknown reasons, the body attacks and disables the glands that secrete tears. Without tears, the cornea becomes dry and painful. Signs of this include:

- Excessive mucus or crust buildup around the eye
- Redness of the white of the eye.
- Brown pigment and blood vessels invading the cornea
- Ulcers or holes in the surface of the cornea
- Scarring of the cornea resulting in blindness

The diagnosis of dry eye requires a thorough ophthalmic examination by your veterinarian. This must include a timed tear production test, screening for glaucoma and corneal stain to check for ulcers or scratches. Screening is recommended for certain breeds such as the Cocker Spaniel, Bulldogs, West Highland White Terriers, Shih-Tzus, and Lhasa Apsos. These breeds are at a higher risk for development of dry eye.

Treatment for dry eye is life long. Topical medications are used to calm the immune systems attack on the tear gland and to provide much needed moisture. In severe cases that do not respond to medical therapy, surgery can be done to re-route saliva to the eye. This can only be done by a veterinary ophthalmologist.

Having a dry eye is very painful. It's like having sand in your eye all the time. No matter how much you blink, it doesn't go away. Being faithful to your pet's medication is crucial to prevent this constant pain and loss of vision.