



## Glaucoma

Glaucoma is a very painful condition of the eye that can lead to blindness if left unmanaged. Glaucoma occurs when the pressure inside the eye (intraocular pressure or IOP) gets too high. In a normal eye, there is a continuous production of fluid that fills the eye and then drains out. The rate of fluid filling and draining should remain equal. Glaucoma occurs when the fluid is unable to drain out fast enough thereby allowing the pressure to go up. This increased pressure causes damage to the optic nerve and the pet will eventually lose their sight and even their eyes if the condition is left untreated. Again, glaucoma hurts.

The causes of glaucoma can be hereditary or secondary to other problems inside the eyeball. Some breeds have a higher risk for developing glaucoma. They are: cocker spaniels, poodles, beagles, basset hounds, huskies, malamutes, chows and shar peis. It is recommended these breeds be screened for glaucoma with their annual exam.

Secondary glaucoma can develop in one or both eyes after trauma or infection. It can also be related to cataracts, other lens abnormalities or tumors.

Signs of glaucoma include squinting, rubbing or pawing at the eye, hiding in dark places, dilated pupils, a visibly enlarged eyeball, a bluish cast to the eye or blindness. None of these signs are specific for glaucoma so an ophthalmic examination is needed.

The only way to diagnose glaucoma is to measure the intraocular pressure. Other tests may be needed to determine the cause. Referral to a veterinary ophthalmologist is sometimes needed to identify the cause and determine the best plan for treatment. Whether glaucoma occurred suddenly or has developed slowly affects the treatment plan as well as the prognosis. For sudden onset glaucoma, treatment must be started quickly in order to save vision and the eye itself.

In summary, glaucoma is a painful disease that needs life time care. For those pets whose pain cannot be controlled and have lost their vision, removal of an already blind eye should be considered.