Eyelash Abnormalities

Distichia, Ectopic Cilia, Trichiasis

Distichia are eyelashes which originate in the oil glands that line the eyelid margin. They tend to float in the tear film rather than being directed away from the surface of the eye. Distichiasis is an inherited condition in the dog. Some patients will show symptoms of excessive tearing, squinting, and corneal ulceration in the affected eye, while others do not have any symptoms at all.

Ectopic cilia are abnormal hairs which originate from the underside of the eyelid. The lash therefore constantly rubs on the cornea (the clear windshield to the eye) creating pain and discomfort. Often, the hair or hairs will create a corneal ulcer. Pets will exhibit squinting, tearing, and redness in the affected eye.

Trichiasis refers to a hair which originates in a normal location but then becomes deviated or misdirected towards the cornea. These can occur at any location around the eye. Trichiasis is a common cause of excessive tearing as well as corneal scarring. Typically trichiasis is not painful.

Diagnosis

The diagnosis of all three conditions is made under the slit lamp microscope. Fluorescein stain will be used to evaluate the health of the cornea.

Treatment

Several surgical procedures are used to correct these disorders. The choice of procedure is based on each individual patient. Surgery is only recommended if the eyelash abnormality is causing your pet harm or discomfort.

Surgery is 90% successful. This means that 10% of the hairs can regrow. The procedure will only need to be repeated if symptoms recur.

Pets can grow new abnormal eyelashes up to 2-3 years of age.

Have Questions or Need a Consult?

If you have any questions about Eyelash Abnormalities or suspect your pet may have an Eyelash Abnormality, please contact South Texas Veterinary Ophthalmology anytime; we are available 24-7 at 210.930.8383, ext 3.