

What is Nictans Gland Prolapse?

Nictans gland prolapse is a condition where the tear gland in a dog's third eyelid becomes prolapsed, meaning it pops out of its normal position and becomes visible as a red or pink mass in the inner corner of the eye.

Its common name is cherry eye because of its rounded, reddish appearance.



Common Symptoms Include:

- Red, swollen mass in the inner corner of the eye
- Eye discharge or irritation
- Squinting or pawing at the eye
- Dry eye or chronic inflammation (if untreated)

Understanding and Treating Cherry Eye

The third eyelid contains a tear gland that is normally anchored in place by connective tissue. In some dogs, this tissue is weak or stretches too easily, allowing the gland to slip out of position.

If the nictans gland remains prolapsed it can cause irritation to the cornea or shrink over time resulting in a decrease in tear production (dry eye) in the eye.

Because the nictans gland provides 1/3 of the tear production, surgical replacement of the gland is recommended. Dogs who have had the gland removed have a significantly higher risk of developing poor tear production or dry eye in the future which can cause loss of vision, which is why removal of the gland is not recommended.

Larger breeds may also have scrolled cartilage (rolling out of the margin of the third eyelid). An inherited defect in the cartilage in the third eyelid leads to the eversion and may require additional repair.

Evaluating Suitability for Surgery

Our experienced veterinary ophthalmologists will conduct a thorough evaluation of your pet's eye health. We will discuss your pet's diagnosis and recommendations for treatment, including pre-anesthetic blood work. For surgery, pets are dropped off in the morning and picked up later that day.

What to Expect After Surgery

- Eye drops or ointments
- E-collar to prevent rubbing
- Follow-up visits to monitor healing

Most dogs recover well with surgery and maintain good long-term eye health. Prompt treatment helps prevent complications and decreases the risk for re-prolapse.