

## What Is Dry Eye?

Dry Eye, or Keratoconjunctivitis Sicca (KCS), is a condition where a dog's eyes don't produce enough (or adequate quality) of natural tears. Tears are vital for keeping the surface of the eye moist, nourished, and protected. When tear production drops, the eye can become irritated, inflamed, and more prone to infection and ulcers.

## Causes of Dry Eye

Several factors can lead to decreased tear production, including:

- Immune-mediated destruction of the tear glands (most common cause)
- Congenital or breed predisposition (Cocker Spaniels, Bulldogs, Shih Tzus, Yorkies, Pugs, and others)
- Injury or nerve damage
- Certain medications (like sulfa drugs)

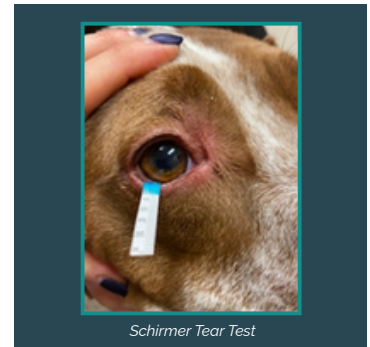
## Signs to Watch For

- Red, irritated eyes
- Thick, yellow or green discharge
- Squinting or blinking often
- Dull or dry-looking corneas
- Rubbing at the eyes
- Recurrent eye infections or ulcers

If left untreated, KCS can cause chronic discomfort and even vision loss.

## Diagnosing Dry Eye

Dry eye is diagnosed with a simple test called the Schirmer Tear Test, which measures tear production over a short period of time. Tear film quality is evaluated with a stain test. These tests are quick, painless, and performed in the clinic.



Schirmer Tear Test

## Treating Dry Eye

While dry eye is typically a lifelong condition, it can be successfully managed with proper and consistent care.

Common treatments include:

- Daily eye medications to stimulate tear production (like cyclosporine or tacrolimus)
- Artificial tears to provide moisture
- Anti-inflammatory drops or ointments
- In severe cases, surgical options (like a parotid duct transposition) or cyclosporine implants may be discussed

With consistent treatment, most dogs with dry eye remain comfortable and retain good vision.

