

### What Is a Corneal Ulcer?

A corneal ulcer is an open wound on the surface of the eye. The cornea is the clear outer layer that protects the eye—sort of like a windshield. When it's damaged, it can become painful, vulnerable to infection, and impact your pet's vision.



### Signs to Watch For:

- Squinting or keeping the eye closed
- Redness or swelling on or around the eye
- Watery or thick ocular discharge
- Cloudiness or a bluish haze over the eye
- Rubbing or pawing at the face or eye
- Light sensitivity or blinking more than usual

If you notice any of these signs, contact us promptly—corneal ulcers can worsen quickly if untreated.

### Common Causes

- Trauma: scratches from play, pawing, or rubbing the eye
- Foreign bodies: like dust, grass seeds, or debris
- Dry eye (KCS): reduced tear production
- Infections: bacterial, viral, or fungal
- Eyelid or eyelash disorders: like entropion (rolling in of eyelids) or ectopic cilia (hair under eyelid)
- Chemical irritants: like shampoo or cleaners
- Spontaneous/age-related

### Diagnosis & Treatment

A corneal ulcer is diagnosed by:

- Complete eye exam
- Fluorescein stain will highlight any damage to the cornea
- Testing of tear production and eye pressure may be needed

Treatment depends on the type and severity of the ulcer and may include:

- Topical antibiotics to prevent or treat infection
- Pain relief and anti-inflammatory drops or oral medications
- E-collar to protect the eye(s)
- Lubricants for healing and tear support
- Treating the underlying cause
- Surgery or procedure may be recommended in more severe or non-healing cases

Important: Never use over-the-counter eye medications without veterinary guidance. Some drops (like those with steroids) can make ulcers much worse.



### Follow-Up Care

- Most superficial/non-infected ulcers heal within 5–7 days, but regular rechecks are essential.
- Do not stop medications early—even if the eye looks better.
- Prevent trauma: avoid rough play, trim sharp nails, and use an e-collar if recommended.