

SEADOWN

VETERINARY GROUP

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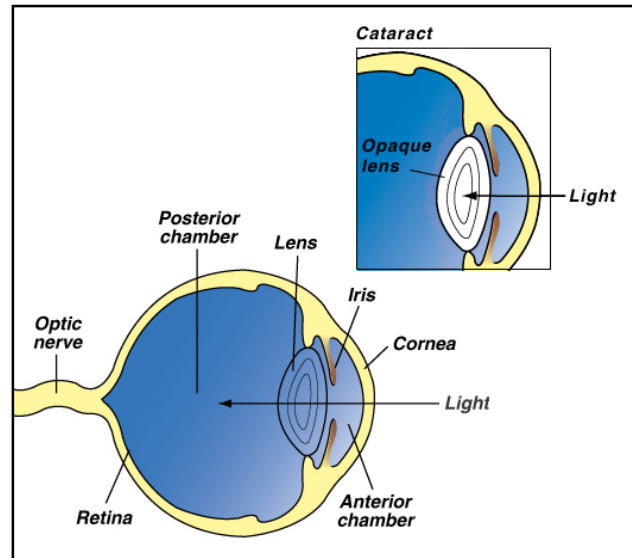


Cataract Surgery

What are cataracts?

The lens is situated approximately in the centre of the eye. In the normal animal it is clear and functions to focus light on the back of the eye (the retina), contributing to vision.

A cataract is an opacity in the lens, which depending on its size and density can affect vision and eventually lead to blindness.



Why do cataracts form?

Cataracts can occur in any species but are particularly common in dogs. They may be hereditary and are recognised in several breeds of pedigree dogs. They may also occur as part of the ageing process. Diabetes in dogs often leads to development of cataracts and loss of vision.

Cataracts may be present from birth (congenital) or occur as the animal matures (developmental). They may or may not progress. They can be associated with other eye problems.

What is cataract surgery?



Cataract surgery is performed through a small incision in the surface of the eye (cornea). Pulses of ultrasound are used to break up and remove the abnormal lens material. In some cases an artificial lens may be inserted. One or both eyes may be operated on, either together or on different occasions.

Can my animal have cataract surgery?

Your pet needs to be examined by a veterinary ophthalmologist prior to embarking on cataract surgery. To be suitable for surgery the following factors need to be considered

- Whether the cataracts are having a considerable affect on vision
- The animal's general health status (a general anaesthetic is required)
- If other eye problems are present, which may mean surgery is unsuitable
- The personality of the animal. Long term medication and eye drops make treatment of aggressive patients difficult.
- The commitment of the owner. You may need to medicate your pet several times a day for weeks-months and bring him/ her for regular check ups
- Financial situation. Cataract surgery is expensive.

The nitty-gritty! Animals are usually on eye drops for up to 2 weeks before their operation. They are generally admitted to the hospital on the morning of the operation, and kept in overnight. Following surgery your pet will be on tablet medication and eye drops for a variable time period (weeks-months). Most animals do not need medicating for the rest of their lives.

Animals are usually re-examined 1 week and 3 weeks following surgery at Seadown. However more frequent checks or more long term monitoring may be required

Costs of surgery are variable and depend on the amount of medication and follow up required by the individual, but please feel free to discuss this with the ophthalmologist at the initial consultation, or contact the surgery for guidance.



What to expect

The aim of cataract surgery is to provide the animal with a comfortable, visual eye. Some animals appear to cope very well with vision from one eye alone, others benefit from surgery in both. Surgery is successful in about 90% of cases. Unfortunately some patients can suffer from problems of inflammation or increased pressure (glaucoma) in the eye following surgery and require longer term medications and follow-up.

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