

GLAUCOMA?

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT TO CHECK IOP?

*High IOP (intraocular pressure) may be very painful
and can rapidly lead to irreversible blindness.*



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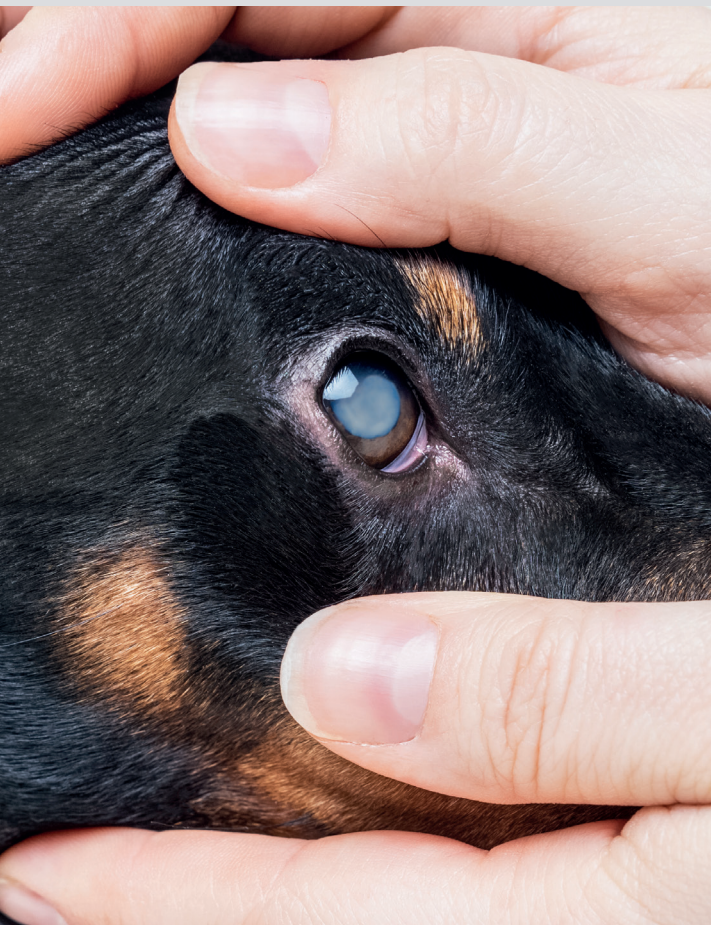
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WHAT IS GLAUCOMA?

Glaucoma is defined as an increased pressure inside the eye. The eye has a normal pressure that it maintains, which is typically around 10-25 mmHg. This pressure allows all the structures inside of the eye to function normally without interruption.

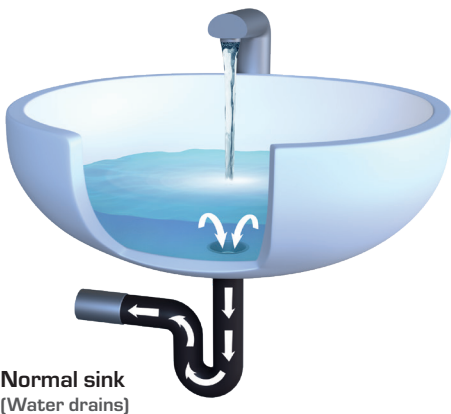
If the pressure increases above this level for an extended period of time, the high pressure can damage the structures inside of the eye, resulting in permanent blindness.



How Glaucoma develops

The eye operates in a similar fashion to a bathroom sink: fluid is produced by special cells inside the eye and then the fluid exits the eye through a drainage area. Glaucoma develops when the “drain” of the eye ceases to function and fluid builds up inside the eye. This high pressure is called glaucoma.

Glaucoma can be a very serious condition in your pet’s eye. The high pressure leads to compression and damage of nerves and blood vessels. If the pressure remains high for an extended period of time, this can result in pain and total blindness.



Importance of checking the eye pressure

Unfortunately, many of the early glaucomatous changes to a pet's eye are not visible to the owners.

The only way to truly diagnose glaucoma is to measure the pressure inside of the eye. This can easily be performed by your veterinarian or a veterinary ophthalmologist using the Icare TONOVET tonometers.

Intraocular pressure can fluctuate throughout the day and night, as well as on different days, especially in glaucomatous eyes. As a result, important peaks in IOP may be missed outside of clinic hours. Home monitoring of intraocular pressure is possible using TONOVET devices. If you are interested in monitoring your pet's eye pressure at home, please contact your veterinarian or veterinary ophthalmologist for more information.

The TONOVET allows for an easy, non-painful, and accurate evaluation of the pressure within your pet's eye!



IOP measuring with the TONOVET is painless for your pet.



Once glaucoma is diagnosed, the first step is to determine if the glaucoma is primary (meaning it is genetic), or secondary (meaning it is caused by another problem inside the eye). Once this has been determined, a treatment plan can be developed.

Treatment of glaucoma involves lowering the pressure, protecting the nerve and attempting to restore vision. This is accomplished with medications and sometimes surgery. In cases where the glaucoma is secondary, treatment is focused on resolving the underlying disorder. In cases of primary glaucoma, the disease is progressive and will continue to worsen until vision is lost if treatment is not initiated.

When primary glaucoma is diagnosed, eye drops, and oral medications will likely be started to try and lower the pressure. The most common glaucoma medications work by either decreasing the fluid production in the eye (aka “turning down the faucet”) or by allowing fluid to exit the eye through a different pathway (aka “finding a different drain for the sink”). These medications cannot be discontinued and patients will need frequent trips to your veterinarian to recheck the pressure and see how effective the treatment is.

Because glaucoma is a progressive disease, the medications often times become ineffective at controlling the pressure and surgery is the only option to control pressure and save vision. The two now common surgical options involve a laser procedure to reduce fluid production inside the eye or a valve procedure to shunt fluid out of the eye. In most cases, these two surgeries are performed at the same time to give the best chance at controlling the pressure long term.

While many patients do well with this procedure for an extended period of time (months to years), other patients unfortunately have the pressure increase again shortly after surgery. There is no way to predict which patients will have a successful outcome and which patients will experience a return of glaucoma shortly after surgery.



Glaucoma is a progressive disease. It is important to visit your veterinarian and veterinary ophthalmologist regularly.



Consult your veterinarian

It is important to remember that glaucoma is never cured, but instead controlled by medications, surgery, or a combination of both. While some patients can be managed for years with this type of therapy, others lose the battle and lose vision much sooner. With consultation with your veterinarian and veterinary ophthalmologist, a plan to figure out the best approach for you and your pet can be discussed.

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