"Dry eye" in dogs

STUDY SUMMARY

Keratoconjunctivitis sicca (KCS) is commonly known as 'dry eye'. Dogs with dry eye are unable to produce enough tears (or tears of good enough quality) to keep their eyes lubricated and functioning as expected of a healthy eye. This leads to sore eyes, eye infections and eye ulcers that are hugely painful.

Owners of breeds that are highly prone to dry eye should look out for signs, such as red eyes and lack of shine, and seek immediate veterinary attention if concerned.

Veterinarians should test for the adequacy of tear production as part of the annual physical examination of all dogs. Predisposed breeds should be monitored very carefully, especially as they approach their later years.

The high predisposition to dry eye of flat faced (Brachycephalic) breeds supports the advice from the UK Brachycephalic Working Group to “Stop and think before buying a flat-faced dog”.

Proportion of dogs with dry eye

1 in 250

Number of dogs in study

363,898

CONCLUSIONS:

Owners of breeds that are highly prone to dry eye should look out for signs, such as red eyes and lack of shine, and seek immediate veterinary attention if concerned.

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Other factors predisposing to dry eye

The average age at first diagnosis of dry eye was 7.5 years.

In total, 22 breeds were predisposed to dry eye. Flat-faced or brachycephalic breeds had 3.6 times the risk compared to breeds with medium length skulls.

*Reference category

The high predisposition of flat faced breeds compared to non-flat faced breeds.

PREDISPOSED BREEDS

American Cocker Spaniel
Pug
Lhasa Apso
Cavalier King Charles Spaniel
English Bulldog
English Bull Terrier
English Cocker Spaniel
Basset Hound
West Highland White Terrier
Shih Tzu
Border collie
Labrador retriever

PROTECTED BREEDS

Flat-faced or brachycephalic breeds.

TIMES INCREASED RISK

TIMES DECREASED RISK

American Cocker Spaniel 52.3 x
38.0 x
Pug 38.0 x
22.1 x
Lhasa Apso 22.1 x 21.6 x
Cavalier King Charles Spaniel 21.6 x
20.8 x
English Bulldog 20.8 x 19.0 x
English Bull Terrier 19.0 x 16.9 x
English Cocker Spaniel 16.9 x 15.1 x
Basset Hound 15.1 x 13.5 x
West Highland White Terrier 13.5 x 12.1 x
Shih Tzu 12.1 x 11.3 x
Border collie 11.3 x 10.3 x
Labrador retriever 10.3 x 9.9 x

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