



Happy Pet Eyes

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Corneal Ulcers in Pets

A Happy Pet Eyes Guide for Pet Owners

At Happy Pet Eyes, we know it can be alarming to hear your pet has a corneal ulcer. Our goal is to help you understand what this diagnosis means, how it is treated, and how we protect your pet's comfort and vision.

What Is a Corneal Ulcer?

The cornea is the clear front surface of the eye. A corneal ulcer is a scratch, erosion, or open sore on this surface. Because the cornea has many nerve endings, ulcers are often painful.

Corneal ulcers can:

- Cause squinting and light sensitivity
- Lead to infection
- Worsen quickly if untreated
- Threaten vision in severe cases

Early treatment is critical.

What Causes Corneal Ulcers?

Common causes include:

- Trauma (scratches from pets, plants, grooming)
- Foreign material in the eye
- Dry eye
- Eyelid abnormalities (entropion, masses)
- Infection
- Chemical irritation

Some ulcers occur spontaneously, especially in certain breeds.

How Are Corneal Ulcers Diagnosed?

Diagnosis is made during a complete eye exam and includes:

- Fluorescein stain to highlight the ulcer
- Evaluation of ulcer depth and size
- Tear production testing
- Assessment of infection or inflammation
- Eye pressure measurement when appropriate

This helps determine severity and best treatment.

Types of Corneal Ulcers

Superficial Ulcers

- Affect only the outer corneal layer
- Often heal within 1–2 weeks with medication

Indolent (Non-Healing) Ulcers

- Fail to heal normally
- May require specialized procedures such as Diamond Burr treatment

Deep or Melting Ulcers

- Extend deeper into the cornea
- Risk rupture
- Require aggressive medical and sometimes surgical care

How Are Corneal Ulcers Treated?

Treatment depends on severity and may include:

- Antibiotic eye drops
- Pain control medications
- Anti-inflammatory therapy
- Tear support lubricants
- Protective E-collar

Non-healing ulcers may require Diamond Burr keratotomy to promote proper healing.

Severe ulcers may require surgery such as conjunctival grafting or corneal graft placement to save the eye.

At-Home Care Is Essential

Healing requires teamwork. You may need to:

- Give eye drops multiple times daily
- Prevent rubbing with an E-collar
- Return for scheduled rechecks

Stopping medications early can delay healing or worsen disease.

Signs to Watch For

Contact us immediately if you see:

- Increased squinting
- More redness or discharge
- Cloudiness or blue/white spot
- Eye swelling
- Sudden vision change

Ulcers can worsen quickly—early intervention matters.