

CATARACTS IN LARGE DOG BREEDS

- Types of Cataracts
- Basic Information
- Other Facts
- Warning Signs and Treatment Options



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Types of Cataracts

There are four types of cataracts found in dogs: Incipient, immature, mature, and hyper mature.

Incipient cataracts affect 15% of the lens and cause no visual deficit for a dog. Immature cataracts affect more than 15% of the lens, often affect multiple layers or different areas of the lens, and causes mild visual deficits for dogs. Mature cataracts affect the entire lens, cause significant visual deficits or complete blindness, and cause the retina to not be visualized during an exam. Hyper mature cataracts cause the lens to shrink and cause inflammation within the eye.



Basic Information

- Cataracts often have hereditary causes
- Age of diagnosis can vary
- Large cataracts can cause chronic pain
- Large dog breeds are more susceptible to cataracts
- Diabetics can cause cataracts



Other Facts

Cataracts can be static or progressive based on breed, type of cataract, and other risk factors. Static cataracts don't grow, and progressive cataracts develop gradually.

If the opacity of your animal's affected eye progresses to 100%, the animal will be blind in that eye. However, if cataracts occupy less than 30% of the lens, they rarely cause diminished vision. When the opacity takes up 60% of the lens, visual impairment becomes apparent.

Warning Signs and Treatment Options

Warning Signs

- Clouding lenses in eyes
- White pupil
- Signs of diminished vision

Treatment options

A veterinary ophthalmologist can determine if your dog is a good candidate for surgically removing cataracts.

Anti-inflammatory eye drops may be prescribed to help fight inflammation. These eye drops will not cure cataracts or loss of vision, but help to prevent lens-induced glaucoma and reduce inflammation.

Sources

Weir M, Ward E. Cataracts in Dogs: VCA Animal Hospitals, <https://vcahospitals.com/know-your-pet/cataracts-in-dogs>

Everything You Need to Know About Cataracts in Dogs: American Kennel Club, <https://www.akc.org/expert-advice/health/cataracts-in-dogs-what-to-know/>

