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Keratoconjunctivitis Sicca (Dry Eye)

General Information

Dry eye is a disease in which tear production is absent or decreased. The transparent front layer of the eye (cornea) dries out and becomes painful. Loss of vision can result.

Tears are produced from two major sources: the tear glands positioned above each eyeball and the accessory glands distributed throughout the front of the eyes, including the eyelids.

Disease or destruction of these tear glands may reduce tear production to an unhealthy level. The exact cause in individual cases may be unknown; however, typical causes include trauma, chemicals, infections, tumors, nerve degeneration and immune reactions.

Important Points in Treatment

1. Your patience and determination are critical to your pet's comfort because medical attempts to correct the condition may take weeks to months or may never be entirely successful. Even if normal tear production never returns, you can provide increased comfort to your pet and usually preserve some vision.
2. Providing eye lubrication during the treatment period is very important because keeping the eyes moist increases the chances of curing the disease.
3. If normal tearing is unattainable, an operation called parotid duct transposition may be performed. This involves redirecting a salivary duct from the mouth to the eye so that saliva substitutes for tears. The operation is not without problems and is recommended only after an intense effort has been made to treat the condition with medication alone.

Notify the Doctor if Any of the Following Occur

- Vomiting persists after giving any medication.
- You cannot give the medication as directed.
- Your pet continually rubs its eyes.