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Chronic Superficial Keratitis (“Pannus”)

Chronic Superficial Keratitis (“Pannus”) is a syndrome that causes a “fleshy” type of tissue to accumulate in and on the surface of the eye, the cornea. The disease is seen more commonly in certain breeds, including the German Shepherd, other Shepherd breeds, Greyhounds, and Dachshunds. Frequently corneal pigmentation and cholesterol dystrophy (deposition of cholesterol within the cornea) are associated with “Pannus”. Pannus can also cause depigmentation and thickening of the third eyelid.



Pannus

The cause of pannus is unknown but certain risk factors including ultraviolet light, altitude, and breed may be involved. Most patients respond to steroids or other drugs which suppress the local immune reaction; therefore, “pannus” is considered an “immune-mediated” disease where the body is producing antibodies directed against the cornea.

Control is the key word with this potentially blinding disease since most patients with pannus MUST continue with topical medications for the remainder of their lives. Frequency of the treatment may be decreased over time but we will always have to use the medications to some degree.

Follow-up visits are very important with this disease so that we can carefully monitor the patient's progress. If the initial medication is not effective, other medications and treatment modalities are used. ▪