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## Prolapsed Gland of the Third Eyelid (Cherry Eye)

When the gland of the third eyelid pops out of position, it protrudes from behind the eyelid as a reddish mass. This prolapsed lacrimal (tear) gland condition is commonly referred to as "cherry eye". The problem is seen primarily in young dogs, including the Cocker Spaniel, Lhasa Apso, Shih-Tzu, Poodle, Beagle, and Bulldog. It's also seen sometimes in certain cat breeds including the Burmese.



Despite its appearance, cherry eye itself is not a painful condition. However, the longer the tear gland is exposed, the more likely it will come irritated and inflamed. If the patient rubs at the eye, it could cause the gland to bleed or become infected. Furthermore, the function of the tear gland could become compromised if the gland is exposed for long periods of time.

To correct cherry eye, surgical REPLACEMENT of the gland is necessary. Surgery is not just for cosmetics! The gland of the third eyelid plays an important role in maintaining normal tear production, responsible for 40-50% of the tears. Dogs that have had the tear gland removed are predisposed to developing Keratoconjunctivitis Sicca (dry eye) later in life. Dry Eye is uncomfortable for the patient, and requires the owner to administer topical medications several times a day for the remainder of the patient's life. To avoid this condition, it is preferable to reposition the gland so it can continue to function normally.

The procedures used to correct cherry eye by ophthalmologists vary depending on surgeon preference but a common procedure is called a "pocket technique". Although the gland cannot be put back into its original position in the third eyelid, a new pocket is made near the original position. The tear gland is tucked inside the pocket and the pocket is sutured closed. Another commonly used procedure tacks the gland down to the orbital rim. Unfortunately, no surgical procedure is 100% effective, and occasionally additional surgery is needed. Post-surgical inflammation may take 1-2 weeks to resolve. ■