

# Eyelid Abnormalities in Dogs & Cats



*A cat with painful eyes and the third eyelids up.*

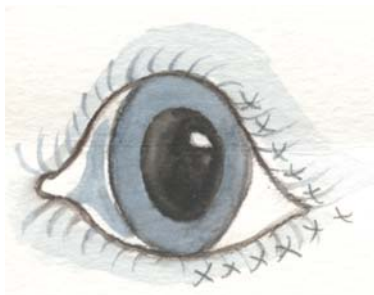
## Entropion

Entropion is a condition where the eyelids roll inwards, causing the eyelashes and facial hair to contact the surface of the eye. This results in tearing, pain and possible ulceration of the cornea.

## Causes of Entropion

There are various causes of entropion. Entropion may be primary (*due to an underlying anatomic problem as seen in breeds such as Rottweilers, Mastiffs, Retrievers, Cocker Spaniels, Bulldogs, Sharpeis, and Persian cats*), or secondary to something painful in the eye, causing persistent squinting.

## Surgical Intervention



*Eyelid with sutures after corrective surgery.*

Entropion usually needs surgical intervention. There are various types of surgical procedure which may be used in entropion repair. Each case

is slightly different. The important thing to remember is that some cases may require more than one surgical procedure, especially breeds which have a lot of facial folds, or in breeds where the entropion is severe.

The success rates for surgery are very high. As eye specialists, we are trying to correct something that is anatomically abnormal. *Our goal is an eye which is not irritating, but it may not look exactly perfect compared to other animals which have normal eyelids.*

## Abnormal Eyelid Hairs



*Ingrowing hairs*

Abnormal eyelid hairs are a common cause of chronic irritation and pain in the eyes. These abnormal hairs are called *distichiae* or *ectopic ciliae* (*depending on their location*). Like entropion, they can cause pain, irritation, squinting, and tearing. Some breeds seem to be more predisposed than other breeds. These include *Bull Mastiffs, Cocker Spaniels, Poodles, Shib Tzus, Lhasa Apsos, Shetland Sheepdogs and Staffordshire Bull Terriers.*

## Treatment



Treatment involves surgery of some type to remove the hairs. If the hairs are just plucked, this is occasionally sufficient to remove the problem permanently. More than likely however they grow back. Therefore permanent removal by surgery is usually the best thing to do.

Surgical removal of these hairs is done usually under an operating microscope, using nitrous oxide to freeze the hair follicles in the case of distichiae, while surgical removal is used for ectopic cilia. For distichiae, we can only freeze those hairs which we can see. New hairs may often appear at other sites.

## Success of Surgery

The success of surgery is high, but repeat surgery sometimes needs to be performed. It is usually the hairs which had not emerged on the first surgery that 4-6 weeks later cause the problems necessitating a second freeze.

## Complications

Complications of surgery can involve loss of pigmentation in the eyelid margins so the eyelids become pink (usually temporarily) or grow white hair (*which may be permanent*). Eyelid swelling after surgery is common but not usually painful. In most cases, the swelling disappears after a few days.

## Home Care

Hot compressing after surgery helps to reduce the swelling and to clean discharges which may accumulate. Your pet may also be sent home with tablets to help with pain relief if needed.

