

Entropion in the Dog



What is entropion?

Entropion means that your dog's eyelid margin has 'flipped' over and that as a result, hair is now rubbing on the surface of the eye (cornea). If you know how it feels when you have just one eyelash in your eye, then you can imagine how your dog must feel with not just one but many hairs rubbing on the eye! Entropion can be very painful and if left untreated, it is likely to result in wounds on the eye, scarring of the cornea and loss of sight. We therefore usually advise urgent correction of entropion.



An inturned eyelid (entropion) before and after the lid has been pulled out by hand to a correct position. The objective of the surgery is to turn the lid out permanently.

Why has my dog developed entropion?

The most common causes for entropion are

- Breed related – poor eyelid conformation such as in patients with very saggy eyelids and excess skin (Spaniel, Shar Pei) overlong eyelids (St Bernard, Bulldog)
- Developmental – in adolescent dogs such as Labrador puppies
- Spastic – in response to pain

How is entropion treated?

We usually recommend surgical correction under general anaesthesia. The affected eyelid is clipped and aseptically prepared. The surgeon can then cut out the required amount of eyelid skin to create a lid that fits well to the eyeball. Entropion surgery is carried out with loupes or the operating microscope to cause as little scarring as possible. The sutures used to reconstruct the surgical wounds are extremely fine and dissolve on their own accord, so removal should not be necessary other than where the sutures cause skin reactions. Alternatives to surgical correction are temporary sutures to turn the lid out in young pups or the use of cosmetic 'tissue fillers' – which however are only successful in a percentage of cases.

What are the risks of surgical treatment for entropion?

- General anaesthesia risks
- Under-correction – If the surgeon removes too little of the eyelid skin, then entropion can recur after the operation.
- Over-correction - If too much eyelid skin is removed, then the eye will be everted after the operation.
- The surgical wound might not heal (break down) and repeat suturing might be required
- The sutures could rub on the eye and cause irritation

The surgeon decides how much eyelid skin is removed for ideal correction in each individual patient. The more experience your surgeon has, the greater the chance that one operation produces a good result. However, entropion surgery is an art and not a science and there is always the possibility that your pet may require a 2nd surgery. In rare and often complex cases, multiple operations are required to treat eyes with severe entropion and a charge will be made for each of these.

What is the aftercare following entropion surgery?

- Your dog will need to wear a collar and be closely supervised for up to 14 days
- Antibiotic drops or ointment will need to be applied to the eye
- Some medication such as pain killers and antibiotics will need to be given by mouth

Most patients are pain-free right after the operation and are able to return to a normal exercise after two weeks.



Photos of the right eye of a Pointer puppy before and 3 weeks after entropion surgery.
The sutures are still in place but will drop out on their own soon.

