



# Cataract Surgery

### What is a cataract?

A cataract is any abnormal cloudiness in the lens of the eye. This may vary from a small area requiring no treatment through to total cataract and blindness. The cloudiness arises from a permanent alteration in the structure of the lens, therefore cataracts can only be corrected by surgery, when necessary.

### Pre-operative considerations

Prior to surgery patients should be in as good a state of general health as possible. Diabetic dogs should be reasonably stable.

We will often request a full blood screen to confirm health status. The most important thing is our patient's general health, so sometimes the surgery can wait until other problems are resolved or stabilised. For example, dental problems need to be treated by the patient's own veterinary practice prior to the surgery.

Some diabetic cataracts, however, are urgent and in this situation, it is best to proceed to surgery promptly, even if this means that these patients may require additional stabilisation of their blood glucose after the operation.

Your dog's temperament is extremely important. Very restless or aggressive dogs can make medication and clinical examination difficult and this may even prevent us doing full post-operative checks.

### The surgery

The surgery is performed under general anaesthesia. During surgery, the cataract is removed by a procedure called phacoemulsification using the same modern equipment and techniques as in human surgery. Once the cataract is removed, we usually insert an artificial lens in the eye to take over the function of the lens which has been removed. Not all eyes are suitable to receive an artificial lens, however in these cases we would hope to restore useful vision even without a lens replacement.

### Post-operative care

- Eye drops are required for a minimum of six months after surgery.
- Examinations and rechecks (can vary on the individual case):
  - Re-examination the morning following the operation
    - One week after surgery
    - One month
    - Two months
    - Three months
    - Six months
    - 12 months
  - You will be able to bring your pet back to us promptly if there is a problem. This applies especially in the first four weeks after the operation.
- All post-operative re-examinations and drugs are charged to the client along with any additional surgical procedures required.

## Complications

Various complications may occur. We anticipate these and take every step to prevent them, but this is major surgery for the eye, and we cannot eliminate all risks. Although success rates are relatively high, complications can occur and an informed decision must be made. Complications may incur additional costs in terms of consultations, medications and procedures and may seriously affect the final outcome.

The most important complications are:

### Inflammation

All eyes have a degree of inflammation after surgery however in most cases this is controllable with medication. In some dogs however (+/- 15%), the inflammation cannot be controlled with drops alone, and may require injections into the eye under local anaesthetic and sedation.

### Glaucoma

Glaucoma is a raised pressure in the eye and is always potentially serious. We measure the intraocular pressure and perform a test called gonioscopy to identify at risk patients prior to surgery, however some risk of glaucoma is present in all dogs.

Following surgery, and at subsequent re-examinations, we keep testing the intraocular pressure to monitor for the development of glaucoma. If high intraocular pressure does develop in the short term, we may need to take emergency measures to bring the pressure down. Longer term pressure rise is the most serious complication seen. It may cause pain and impair or destroy the patient's sight. This will require ongoing medication and anti-glaucoma drugs are relatively expensive

### Lens regrowth

"Can the cataract grow back?" is a logical question to ask. During surgery, the bulk of the cataract is removed, however it is not possible to completely remove all lens cells, and some small cells are inevitably left behind. These can sometimes grow over time, giving the eye a mild cloudy appearance. In the vast majority of cases this causes no harm, and very little vision impairment. Rarely, the regrowth can become excessive and cause inflammation, and other serious complications. In these cases, the regrowth needs to be removed under general anaesthesia. This procedure is much more common in young dogs and owners of young dogs should allow for the possibility of the additional cost.

### Other complications

Other uncommon but serious complications include intraocular haemorrhage, intraocular infection, and retinal detachment, all of which may be difficult to manage.

### Enucleation

Where there are unmanageable complications which cause chronic pain, despite everyone's best efforts, the most effective means of pain relief may be removal of the eye (also called enucleation). Chronic glaucoma is the most common cause. Enucleation is eventually required in 3% of all eyes undergoing cataract surgery.

## Summary

Cataract surgery is a major operation for the eye and should not be taken lightly. You will need to be aware of all that is involved so that you can make an informed choice, weighing potential benefits against the risks. However, current modern methods of cataract surgery have much higher success rates, and unfortunately there is no other method of resolving cataracts.

With a high success rate for the operation, and our support for the peri-operative period, you can embark on cataract surgery with as much confidence as with many other operations commonly performed on dogs.

# Cataract Surgery Journey at Eye Veterinary Clinic

## 1) Location

- All our surgery takes place at: Eye Veterinary Clinic, Marlbrook, Leominster, Herefordshire, HR6 0PH where we have the trained staff and facilities.

## 2) Nurse Admit

- On the day of surgery, one of our nurses will meet at your pre-arranged admit time, and go through our standard pre-operative questionnaire, and make sure you are happy with the procedure.
- Our nurses are very experienced in arranging cataract surgery and can answer most questions themselves or refer you to one of the vets if necessary. Feel free to ask our nurses any questions that you may have. We are here to help.

## 3) Before Surgery

- Your pet will have a re-examination by one of our ophthalmologists. They will receive all of their pre-operative drops and have an ultrasound of their eye to check for any problems before surgery, and we will contact you with the results before going ahead with surgery.

## 4) Surgery

- All being well, we then proceed to surgery, which could take anywhere from 45min to an hour per eye.

## 5) After surgery

- We will contact you as soon as we finish so that you know your pet is ok.
- We then monitor the eyes closely for the rest of the day particularly the pressure. If the pressure rises dangerously then additional drops or procedures may be necessary.

## 6) Discharge

- Dogs are very welcome to stay with us overnight, but we recommend that they do not stay in the hospital as they are usually much happier with their owners.
- Once we are happy that your pet is stable and ready to go home, we will contact you to arrange a time to pick them up from the practice at the end of the day.

## 7) First night

- We have a list of dog-friendly B&Bs nearby for owners who wish to reduce their travelling or alternatively you may go home with your dog and bring them back the next day.

## 8) Next day post-op re-examination

- All dogs need to be seen for a 24 hour post-op check the following morning.

## 9) Subsequent examinations

- Subsequently one week, one month, three months, six months and 12 months would be typical re-examination times, but this very much depends on the individual case.
- Some of these examinations may be arranged for one of our out clinics for ease. Please discuss this with us directly.
- It is important to allow for these checks in your planning. If there are problems with the eyes then additional appointments may be necessary.

## How much will cataract surgery cost?

- Below is a summary of costs for cataract surgery (dogs up to 10Kg)
- The prices quoted are for animals up to 10kg. A surcharge of £4.04 per kg is made for heavier animals due to extra anaesthesia costs.
- Diabetic patients have a £50 surcharge for additional glucose monitoring during the surgery and hospitalization.
- \*Any complications may require additional consultations (£150 each), procedures, hospitalisation and drugs at our standard charges, the cost of which varies depending on the nature of the complications
- We are very happy to provide written prescriptions (which are chargeable) to allow you to buy medications from other sources

### Average Prices for Cataract Surgery (inc. VAT) from July 2022 (prices subject to review)

	One Eye	Both eyes
<b>Assessment:</b>		
Initial consultation	£230	£230
Gonioscopy	Included	Included
<b>Day of Surgery:</b>		
Ultrasound scan	£245.00	£245.00
Cataract removal (inc lens) includes re-examination 1 day and 1 week later	£3318	£4597
Average cost of post-op drugs for immediately after the surgery	£200	£200
<b>Average total (uncomplicated surgery)</b>	<b>£3763</b>	<b>£5042</b>
<b>Possible additional procedures:</b>		
ERG (Electroretinography)	£544	£544
Vitrectomy (may be necessary during surgery)	£307	£307
<b>Average total (complicated surgery)</b>	<b>£4614</b>	<b>£5893</b>
<b>Re-examinations:</b>		
For uncomplicated cases you should budget for at least three further re-examinations	£450 (3 x £150)	
<b>Average total costs for the first 6 months</b>	<b>£5064</b>	<b>£6343</b>
For complicated cases your pet may require additional consultations*	£150 (each)	



# Other Current Charges and Financial Arrangements

From July 2022. These charges and arrangements are subject to review without notice.

## Consultations

- Initial consultation £230
- Re-examination £150
- Initial consultation out of hours £466
- Re-examination out of hours £396
- Out-of-hours procedures will incur additional fees which will be explained to you in detail after your pet is assessed

## Prescriptions

- Prescription Fee 1 item £17.50
- Prescription Fee 2 items £20.50
- Prescription Fee 3 items £23.50

## Insurance

- Direct claim administration fee per form £38.00
- This charge covers the administration costs of completing each insurance form. This fee will not be reclaimable from the insurance company.
- After completion we are required to return claim forms to the client for onward submission to the insurance company.
- We ask that all accounts are settled by the client at the time of the consultation or procedure.
- We will process your claim form as quickly as possible. In exceptional circumstances we will submit direct claims to insurance companies for surgical invoices only but not for drugs or consultations. Any such direct claim must be authorised by our staff in advance. Clients should be aware that any excesses payable remain their liability.

