

ANIMAL MATTERS: Tips & Treatments



Michigan Veterinary
Specialistssm

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OPHTHALMOLOGY: EYELASH ABNORMALITIES

Eyelash abnormalities

Distichia are abnormal eyelid hairs that arise from around a gland in the eyelid known as the Meibomian gland and exit through its opening at the eyelid margin. This gland opens close to the cornea and these hairs usually contact the cornea. Trichiasis refers to eyelid hairs that arise from a normal location, but are directed toward and are in contact with the cornea. Ectopic cilia are hairs that also arise from the Meibomian glands, but exit through the inside surface of the eyelid and usually damage the corneal surface. Distichia and trichiasis are not always significant, but may cause irritation, tearing, corneal pigmentation and scarring, or corneal ulceration. Ectopic cilia are usually a more severe eyelash abnormality as it often causes corneal ulceration.

Pre-disposed breeds

Eyelash abnormalities may occur in any breed. Trichiasis is most common in short-nosed dogs such as the Shih Tzu, Lhasa Apso, Pekingese, Maltese and Pug. Distichia are commonly seen in Cocker Spaniels and Golden Retrievers. Ectopic cilia occur sporadically in most animal breeds. Eyelash conditions are usually seen in young animals.

Treatment

Clinically significant trichiasis is treated with surgical removal of the offending hairs or freezing (cryosurgery) of the affected area to destroy the hair follicles. Clinical distichia and ectopic cilia are treated with destruction of the hair follicle by electrolysis, freezing, or a combination of these procedures. Complete permanent removal of all the eyelid distichia is unlikely. The goal is to decrease clinical signs of the majority of abnormal hairs allowing a functional eyelid and healthy cornea. Occasionally more than one surgery is necessary for offending hairs. Medical treatment and surgery may be necessary in some patients to improve symptoms.

MVS Board-Certified

Ophthalmologists:

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All Ophthalmologists at the MVS locations in Southfield and Auburn Hills serve as an extension of your practice. Our diplomats have years of additional training beyond a DVM degree and have been board-certified by the American College of Veterinary Ophthalmology to assure competency in advanced veterinary ophthalmology.

Questions?

Our ophthalmologists are available for questions and consultations on medical conditions. They are also on-call for in-house consultation on cases seen through the emergency service 24/7.

LOCATIONS

29080 Inkster Road
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3412 East Walton Boulevard
Auburn Hills, MI 48326
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Additional locations for consultation include: Grand Rapids, Toledo, Ann Arbor, and Grayling.