

## Dry Eye (keratoconjunctivitis sicca)

### *What is dry eye?*

Normally eyes are kept moist and comfortable by a constant source of tears.

When the tear production is abnormally low, the surface of the eye can become dry and sticky, and this condition is called 'dry eye'.

Left untreated the condition will cause chronic irritation and pain to the eyes, and possibly result in corneal ulcers and scarring which may ultimately cause blindness.

### *How does my vet know its dry eye?*

Dry eye may be suspected in cases of recurrent conjunctivitis, especially in certain small breed dogs, notably West Highland Terriers.

The vet will perform a painless test called a Schirmer tear test, this measures how much tear production is available in 60 seconds.

### *Can dry eye be treated?*

Yes.

The best available treatment is application of topical cyclosporine, called Optimmune.

It is hoped the Optimmune will stimulate the lazy tear gland to produce more tears but sadly not all dogs respond to treatment.

Other treatments which can help include ocular lubricants, but these are often frustrating as they need to be applied many times daily, and do nothing to try and encourage a return to natural tear production.

Regular checks are encouraged when on treatment.

