

Eye Problems

ALTERNATIVE VETERINARY MEDICINE CENTRE

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EYE PROBLEMS

We all place tremendous importance on our eyes and those of our animals – rightly so. However, despite the intricacy and the apparent fragility of the organ of sight, it has fantastic healing powers, which respond well to homeopathic stimulation. Perhaps it is precisely because of its importance to the animal that it heals so well. In fact, the eye is derived from skin structures, in the embryo, which fact probably contributes to its toughness and excellent healing capability.

Firstly, sight consists of the transmission of light through the transparent parts of the eye – the cornea, the aqueous humour, the lens, the vitreous humour and the epithelium of the retina. This light energy causes light-sensitive cells in the retina to fire, sending impulses down the optic nerve. This nerve has two components, one from the right eye and one from the left. Just by the pituitary gland, **half** of each crosses over, giving the binocular vision capability. These nerve signals are then received and interpreted by the visual cortex of the brain. Problems in any part of this ‘chain’ will lead to reduced, distorted or lost vision.

Anything which upsets the transparency of the eye structures inevitably impedes or obstructs vision. This most commonly includes corneal opacity and cataracts of the lens.

Corneal opacity arises usually from oedema of the cornea. [Homeopathy](#) is very useful in eye problems. *Apis mellifica* and *Silica* may help with this, along with herbal *dandelion*.

Corneal ulceration is a result of injury and is often very painful and dramatic. *Mercurius corrosivus* or *Argentum nitricum* are the most common acute remedies and *Mercurius solubilis* and *Conium* are commonly used in more chronic cases. When the cornea becomes pigmented or vascularised, as a result of long term ulceration, *Silica* or *Mercurius solubilis* may be the remedy.

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Despite the speed with which surgery is usually recommended in such cases, we have NEVER had to operate on a corneal ulcer case, thanks to the many valuable remedies offered by homeopathy. This is a particular boon for Pekinese and Pugs, who are very prone to damage to the cornea of their prominent eyes. We have even enjoyed success when the cornea has ruptured or if the fine inner layer of the cornea (Descemet's membrane) protrudes through a very deep corneal ulcer (keratocoele or keratocele).

Corneal lipidosis is a rarer, painless and not very drastic condition, which causes some clouding of part of the cornea, with some visual disturbance. Homeopathic *Chelidonium* will usually help that.

Dry eye (keratoconjunctivitis sicca) is apparently an auto-immune problem, which results in loss of tear production. The viability of the cornea is therefore threatened. Timely and regular use of artificial tears is essential. Homeopathic treatment, [LASER therapy](#) and [acupuncture](#) can often help but this is not an issue for home prescribing. It is best to seek the advice of a properly qualified [homeopathic vet](#) or [holistic vet](#), who also has experience in treating this condition.

Senile cataracts may respond to or be delayed by homeopathy. *Baryta carbonica*, *Calcarea carbonica*, *Cineraria*, *Thiosinaminum*, *Silica* or *Naphthalinum* may be indicated. Juvenile cataracts are usually of a hereditary origin. Nonetheless, we have seen positive results with these, too. Diabetes mellitus can cause severe cataracts. Homeopathic treatment for the diabetes is indicated, along with low potency *Cineraria*, to help to control the development of cataracts.

Problems with the retina or optic nerve itself may respond to e.g. *Phosphorus*. Enlargement of the Pituitary gland can also impinge on the nerve. In that case, *Pituitary 200* may be useful, along with constitutional or other appropriate treatment. As this field is very complex, it is best to seek the advice of a properly qualified homeopathic veterinary surgeon.

Injury to the head can, of course, cause visual defects or loss of vision, as a result of disruption of the visual cortex. *Arnica* must not be forgotten. *Natrum sulphuricum*, *Helleborus*, *Opium*, *Glonoinium* and *Aconitum* should be studied, for specific applications.

Eyelid warts can often cause irritation and can grow quite large. Surgery is usually recommended for such cases, in conventional practice, but we tend to try homeopathic medicine first, then, if that fails, simply squeeze them out under a little local anaesthetic, rather than submit the dog to full-scale general

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anaesthesia and surgery. A small proportion of these can re-grow, necessitating repeat of this very non-traumatic procedure.

Periodic ophthalmia (recurrent ophthalmia, recurrent uveitis, equine recurrent uveitis, ERU, moonblindness) is a serious problem affecting horses. The usual outlook is that the affected eye will be lost, unless Homeopathy and Acupuncture are used (by an appropriately qualified and skilled holistic vet). Under the influence of these gentle but powerful therapies, attacks usually become less frequent and less severe, until the episodes eventually cease. Many horses' eyes have been saved in this way.

Cases:

1. The first case involves a Collie working sheepdog, who had been blind for several months, with no cause diagnosed, despite neurological referrals etc. Finally, in desperation, homeopathic help was sought. The farmer was determined that the problem had come on rapidly, after the dog had run into a water trough, while looking back over his shoulder! We gave *Arnica 1M*. The sight was restored in a very short time.

2. Another Collie had gone blind, with similar lack of diagnosis, despite referrals etc. At the homeopathic consultation, it transpired that the vision had rapidly deteriorated since the dog had been left alone one evening, in a living room with a large picture window. There had been a spectacular lightning storm that evening. We gave *Phosphorus* and the sight was restored almost immediately.

Christopher Day – January 2005

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