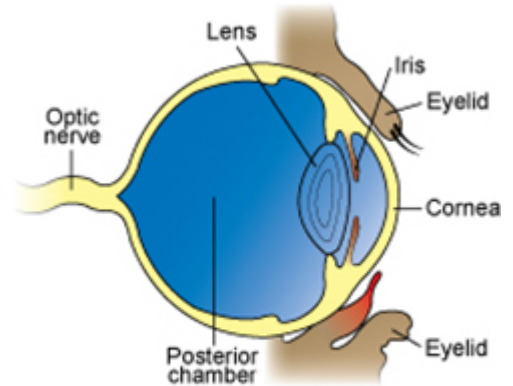


Eyelid Ectropion in Dogs

What is ectropion?

Ectropion is an abnormality of the eyelids in which the lower eyelid "rolls" outward or is everted. This causes the lower eyelids to appear "droopy".

Ectropion exposes the delicate conjunctival tissues that line the inner surface of the eyelids and cover the eyeball, causing drying of the tissues, resulting in *conjunctivitis*. The surface of the eye or the *cornea* may also dry out, resulting in *keratitis (corneal inflammation) or corneal ulcers*. All of these conditions are painful. Corneal damage can also result in corneal scarring, that can impair or obstruct vision. In most cases, both eyes are affected. Ectropion is usually diagnosed in dogs less than one year of age.



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Are certain breeds more likely to have ectropion?

Certain breeds have a higher incidence of ectropion than others. *Congenital ectropion* is the most commonly seen form of this condition in veterinary practice. These breeds include:

- Cocker spaniel
- Saint Bernard
- Bloodhound
- Bassett hound
- Mastiff
- Newfoundland
- Bulldog



Are there other causes of ectropion?

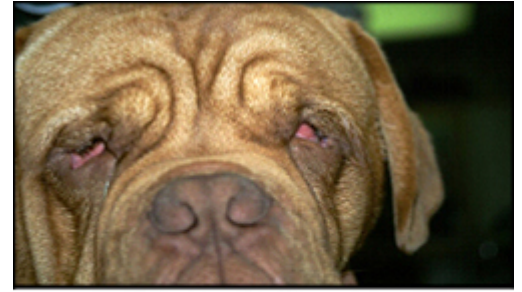
Acquired ectropion can occur in any dog at any age. Acquired ectropion means that a condition other than an inherited trait causes the lower eyelid to "sag" or evert. Some common causes of acquired ectropion include:

- Facial nerve paralysis
- Hypothyroidism
- Scarring secondary to injury
- Chronic inflammation and infection of the tissues surrounding the eyes
- Surgical overcorrection of ectropion
- Neuromuscular disease

What are the clinical signs of ectropion?

"The clinical signs are a "sagging" or "rolling outward" lower eyelid."

The clinical signs are a "sagging" or "rolling outward" lower eyelid. A thick mucoid discharge often accumulates along the eyelid margin. The eye and conjunctivae may appear reddened or inflamed. The dog may rub or paw at the eye if it becomes uncomfortable. Tears may run down the face if the medial aspect of the eyelid (toward the nose) is affected. In many cases, pigment contained in the tear fluid will cause a brownish staining of the fur beneath the eyes.



Ectropion of the lower lids
Picture courtesy of Sally Turner, MA,
VetMB, DVOphthal, MRCVS

How is ectropion diagnosed?

Diagnosis is usually made on physical examination. If the dog is older, blood and urine tests may be performed to search for an underlying cause for the ectropion. Corneal staining will be performed to assess the cornea and to determine if any corneal ulceration is present. Muscle or nerve biopsies may be recommended if neuromuscular disease is suspected.

How is ectropion treated?

The treatment for mild ectropion generally consists of medical therapy, such as lubricating eye drops and ointments to prevent the cornea and conjunctivae from drying out. Ophthalmic antibiotics will be used to combat any corneal ulcers. If the condition is severe, surgical correction can be performed.

What is involved with surgical correction?

"Treatment involves eye surgery to restore the normal contour of the eyelid."

Treatment involves eye surgery to restore the normal contour of the eyelid. A general veterinary practitioner can successfully perform this corrective surgery in the majority of cases. However, if the condition is severe, it may be necessary to refer the patient to a veterinary ophthalmologist for assessment and surgical correction.

How successful is the surgery?

Surgical correction is usually successful. In some cases, your veterinarian may recommend performing two separate surgeries, in order to avoid overcorrection (overcorrection will cause an entropion to develop). This is often necessary when there is a lot of secondary swelling or inflammation of the tissues surrounding the affected eye.

What is the prognosis for ectropion?

The prognosis for medical management or the surgical correction of ectropion is generally good.

"Medical treatment is often life-long..."

The medical treatment is often life-long and surgical correction may require two or more surgeries to correct the condition. Most dogs will enjoy a pain-free normal life. If the condition is treated later and corneal scarring has occurred, there may be permanent irreversible visual deficits. Your veterinarian will discuss a diagnostic and treatment plan for your dog to help you successfully treat this condition.

Should an affected dog be bred?

Due to the concern of this being an inherited condition, **dogs with severe ectropion requiring surgical correction should not be bred.**

This client information sheet is based on material written by: Ernest Ward, DVM

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