



Cataract Surgery in Dogs

What are Cataracts?

Cataracts are a common cause of vision loss in dogs. A cataract is a clouding of the lens inside the eye. As the lens becomes opaque, light can no longer reach the retina normally, leading to reduced vision or blindness. Cataracts may develop for several reasons, including inherited predisposition, diabetes, trauma, retinal degeneration, and age-related change. Cataract surgery can be a highly effective way of restoring vision in suitable cases, but it is not appropriate for every eye or every patient.

What does surgery involve?

Cataract surgery is performed using the same technique used in people, called phacoemulsification. The cloudy lens is broken up and removed through a small incision. Dogs require a general anaesthetic for this procedure. In most cases, a lens, called an intraocular lens or IOL, is placed inside the eye to improve focus after the cataract has been removed.

Is my dog a good candidate?

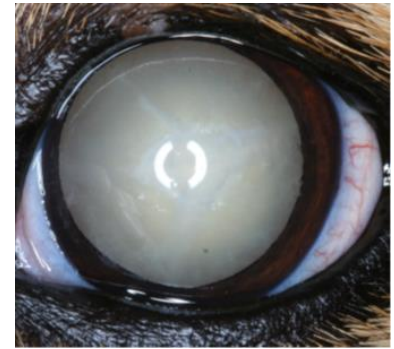
Not all dogs with cataracts are suitable candidates for surgery. The best candidates are in good general health and have no significant additional eye disease that would reduce the chance of a successful outcome, such as glaucoma, retinal degeneration, or severe uveitis. A stable diabetic dog may still be a good candidate.

Your own vet can usually carry out a pre-anaesthetic assessment, including clinical examination and blood tests. In some cases, other problems, such as dental disease, may need to be addressed first.

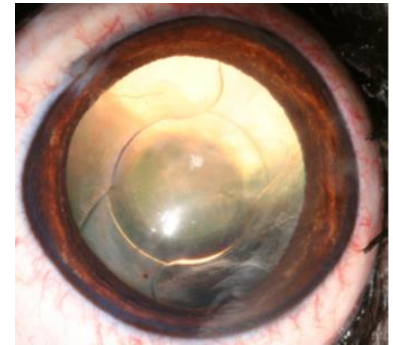
What happens after surgery?

Your dog will stay in hospital overnight so that recovery and eye pressure can be monitored.

- Eye drops are needed frequently at first, then reduced gradually over time. A typical schedule is: 4 times daily for 1 week, then 3 times daily for 3 weeks, then twice daily for 1 month, then once daily for 1 month. In many dogs the drops can then be stopped, although some eyes need long-term medication.
- An oral anti-inflammatory medication is usually given for about one month, and some dogs may also need antibiotic tablets for a few days. The exact treatment plan varies from case to case.
- A buster collar is needed for one week to prevent rubbing at the eyes. Activity should be restricted for four weeks while the eyes heal. Excessive jumping and rough play should be avoided. After the first week, lead walks can gradually be extended. A harness is recommended.
- Follow-up appointments are important. Standard rechecks are usually scheduled at 1 week, 1 month, and 3 months after surgery, although additional rechecks can be arranged if needed.



Mature cataract causing a white pupil and loss of vision.



Cataract surgically removed; intraocular lens in place





What are the risks?

Cataract surgery is generally safe and successful in appropriate cases, but complications can occur.

The most important potential complication is glaucoma. Increased pressure within the eye can cause pain and loss of vision. Some dogs need long-term eye drops to control this and, in a small number of severe cases, removal of a painful blind eye may be necessary.

Inflammation is expected after surgery and is usually controlled with medication, although some dogs need additional treatment. Other uncommon complications include lens displacement, corneal ulceration, infection, retinal detachment, bleeding inside the eye, and, in very young dogs, further opacity caused by lens cell regrowth. If the retina is already damaged or degenerating, vision will not be fully restored even if surgery itself goes well.

These risks will be discussed with you in relation to your own dog, and every precaution is taken to minimise them.

Cost of Cataract Surgery

As a guide, cataract surgery usually costs approximately **€3,300 to €3,500 for one eye**, or **€4,300 to €4,500** for both eyes treated together. Additional costs apply for the initial assessment and for any extra medication or treatment required beyond the usual postoperative care. Three months of follow-up visits are included, together with medications sufficient for most, but not all, cases.

What is the success rate?

Success is defined as comfortable eyes with useful vision. The success rate is approximately 90% at six months after surgery and around 80% in the long term. Outcome depends on the health of the eyes before surgery and on healing afterwards.

Before surgery

Your dog should be fasting from 10 pm the night before, but water is allowed at all times.

Please bring the following items:

- three meals of their normal food.
- any current medication, with enough for two days.
- a harness, collar and lead.
- a blanket, if you wish.

For **diabetic** patients:

- give the normal evening meal and insulin dose the night before
- bring three meals, insulin and syringes with you the morning of the surgery.
- don't give insulin the morning of surgery, we will administer an appropriate dose.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us at info@eyevet.ie. We are happy to guide you through the process and discuss whether cataract surgery is likely to be a suitable option for your dog.

