



## Enucleation in Dogs and Cats

Enucleation is the surgical removal of an eye. It is recommended when an eye is blind, painful, severely damaged, or unlikely to be successfully treated by other means. Although the decision can feel daunting, it is often the best way to relieve pain and improve quality of life.

### Why Is enucleation performed?

Enucleation is usually recommended when an eye is no longer functional and is causing pain, or when there is significant disease that cannot be managed successfully in other ways. Common reasons include:

- trauma, such as a severe injury or a deep infected corneal ulcer
- glaucoma, where high pressure inside the eye causes pain and irreversible damage
- end-stage eye disease, where the eye cannot be saved and remains painful
- neoplasia, where a tumour affects the eye or surrounding tissues

### The enucleation procedure

Enucleation is carried out under general anaesthesia, with close monitoring throughout. The hair around the eye is clipped and the area cleaned. The eye is removed surgically, and the wound is then closed with stitches placed beneath the skin so they are not visible.

### Post-surgical care

Your pet will be monitored as they recover from anaesthesia. You will then be given instructions for care at home, which may include:

- pain relief to keep your pet comfortable; antibiotics are only occasionally needed
- a buster collar to prevent rubbing or scratching for 7 to 10 days
- monitoring the wound for swelling, discharge, or other signs of a problem
- rest and reduced activity for 1 to 2 weeks while healing takes place

A small amount of oozing or bleeding can occur occasionally in the early period after surgery. If this happens, gently hold something clean, such as water-soaked cotton wool or gauze, against the area for a few minutes. A small drop of blood from the nostril on the same side can simply mean drainage of blood from the eye area down the tear duct, rather than a true nosebleed. Any bleeding is unusual after 24 hours. If bleeding is persistent, heavy, or starts later than this, please contact your vet or us.





### **What happens to the eye after removal?**

Unless you prefer otherwise, the removed eye is usually sent to a laboratory for examination. This can be very helpful, particularly if there is concern about tumour, infection, or an underlying disease process. The results may also help guide recommendations for the other eye in some cases. There is a separate fee for laboratory analysis.

### **Are there any alternatives to full eye removal?**

In some cases, an alternative may be appropriate. These options are not suitable for every patient, but they can be discussed if appropriate.

- an intraocular prosthesis, placed within the eye itself in selected cases

### **Risks and potential complications**

Enucleation is generally a safe and effective procedure, but, as with any surgery, complications can occur. These include:

- infection
- temporary discomfort after surgery
- bleeding during or after surgery
- wound breakdown requiring further treatment

### **What will my pet look like after surgery?**

The hair around the eye will be clipped and usually grows back within 1 to 2 months. Some swelling and bruising are expected during the first few days. There may be a small amount of discharge, and occasionally a little blood may be seen from the nostril on that side because the tear ducts drain into the nose. This is usually normal unless it is heavy or persistent. Once the swelling settles, there will be a hollow where the eye has been removed. This is often much less noticeable once the hair has regrown, especially in long-haired pets.

### **How will my pet adjust to living with one eye?**

Most pets adapt very well to living with one eye. Once the painful eye has been removed, many are brighter and more comfortable quite quickly. With time, most return to their normal routines and adapt extremely well.

