

A collage of three images: a veterinarian examining a dog's head, a close-up of a kitten's face, and a close-up of a dog's face.

## Progressive Retinal Atrophy (PRA) in Dogs

### What is Progressive Retinal Atrophy (PRA)?

Progressive retinal atrophy, or PRA, is a group of inherited diseases that cause gradual degeneration of the retina, the light-sensitive tissue at the back of the eye. As the retina deteriorates, vision is gradually lost. PRA typically causes night blindness first, followed by worsening vision in daylight, and eventually complete blindness. The age at which this happens, and the speed of progression, vary between dogs and between breeds. PRA is not usually painful in itself, although some dogs may also develop visible cataracts as the condition progresses.

### What signs might I notice?

Early signs are often subtle. Many dogs first struggle in dim light or at night. You may notice hesitation in unfamiliar places, reluctance on stairs, difficulty outdoors in poor light, or bumping into objects as vision worsens. Because dogs rely so much on smell, hearing, and memory, the changes can be easy to miss at first.



Retinal changes in a dog affected by PRA

### How is PRA diagnosed?

PRA is diagnosed by an ophthalmic examination, looking for characteristic retinal changes. In some cases there may also be secondary cataract formation. An electroretinogram, or ERG, can be performed if needed, although it is not always necessary for diagnosis. In some breeds, genetic testing is also available and may be useful for breeding decisions.

### Can PRA be treated?

There is currently no cure for PRA, and lost vision cannot be restored. Management focuses on confirming the diagnosis, monitoring for any associated eye problems, and helping your dog adapt safely as vision declines. Regular veterinary or ophthalmic check-ups may be recommended, particularly if secondary cataracts develop.





### **Retinae / Retinae XL**

Retinae and Retinae XL are nutritional supplements that may be used while some vision remains. They contain ingredients including lutein, zeaxanthin, omega-3 fatty acids, vitamins, and minerals with antioxidant properties, intended to support retinal health.

They are not a cure for PRA and will not restore lost vision, but they may be used as supportive treatment while a dog still has some useful vision. Once a dog is fully blind, they can usually be discontinued.

If your dog is already receiving Retinae or Retinae XL, we can continue to supply this for you. It can be collected from us or posted out if needed.

### **Living with a dog with PRA**

Although a diagnosis of PRA can be upsetting, many dogs adapt very well to gradual vision loss. Owners often find the diagnosis harder than the dog does, as dogs usually adapt gradually as their vision changes.

Helpful measures include:

- keeping furniture and household layout as consistent as possible
- avoiding clutter and obstacles at floor level
- using a lead in unfamiliar places
- approaching your dog with your voice so they are not startled
- using scent, sound, and routine to help with confidence
- supervising around stairs, swimming pools, balconies, and open drops

Many dogs continue to enjoy walks, play, and normal family life after they have lost vision.

### **Prognosis**

PRA is progressive, and blindness is expected over time. However, PRA is not usually painful, and many affected dogs continue to have a very good quality of life with sensible adjustments at home.

### **Breeding Considerations**

Because PRA is inherited, affected dogs should not be bred from. In breeds where genetic testing is available, this can be helpful when making breeding decisions.

Progressive Retinal Atrophy is a genetic condition that leads to blindness in dogs, but many affected dogs adapt very well and continue to enjoy a good quality of life. If you have any concerns about your dog's vision or quality of life, please contact your own vet or Eye Vet for advice.

