

Entropion

What is *entropion*?

Entropion is an inversion, an inward rolling, of the edge of the eyelid against the eyeball. It causes the eyelashes and hairs that cover the eyelids to contact the surface of the eye which leads to chronic irritation, damage to the cornea (see ulcers section) and loss of transparency of the cornea (i.e. impairment of vision). It can involve one or both eye(s), the upper and/or lower eyelid and may affect one eyelid in part or for the whole of its length. Entropion may be present soon after birth or develop later in life.

What are the signs of *entropion*?

Because the eyelashes and hairs are constantly rubbing the eye, it causes some discomfort. This is associated with squinting, tearing and sometimes excessive sensitivity to light. An eye kept partially closed is also a sign of pain. Inverted eyelids can damage the cornea or the conjunctiva. In these cases, redness of the white of the eye and/or changes in the appearance of the eye (blue, white, red or brown colouration of part of the cornea) and corneal ulcers can be observed.

What are the causes of *entropion*?

Most of the entropions arises in particular breeds where the condition is suspected or has been proved to be hereditary. Entropion frequently occurs in Basset Hounds, Bloodhounds, Chow Chows, English Bulldogs, Golden retrievers, Great Danes, Labrador retrievers, Rottweilers, Shar-Peis and St. Bernards. However, it is important to remember that all breeds can be affected. Factors such as the breed, the age, the number and weight of facial skin folds or the conformation (shape) of the skull will influence the degree and the severity of the entropion.



Lower eyelid entropion in a Labrador.

Entropion may also develop secondary to other conditions: It can result from eyelid trauma or surgery of the eyelids (if these cause scarring of the lid). Pain (due to various eye diseases) may cause spasm of the eyelid muscles, rolling them in. Loss of function of the nerves controlling the eyelids. Chronic severe conjunctivitis. Skin infections. Shrinking of the eyeball (due to severe trauma or inflammation). Finally, severe weight loss or wasting of the facial muscles may cause enophthalmos (when the eye sinks back into the socket) and secondary entropion.

Entropion is much less common in cats than in dogs.

What are the treatments for *entropion*?

Treatment for entropion aims to return the eyelid to a normal position. It requires a surgical procedure performed under general anaesthesia. As this condition is often associated to abnormally long eyelids or misshaped eyelids, several techniques are described. They mainly consist in removing a segment of skin and muscle from the eyelid, close to and parallel to the free margin

and/or shortening of the eyelid. When a dog has heavy facial skin folds or ears, it is not unusual for more than one surgical procedure to be required. Removal of these skin folds is sometimes required ('facelift').

Definitive surgeries are only performed in adult animals, because the severity of the entropion may change during growing period due to changes in the shape of facial structures or can even resolve itself completely. Temporary sutures or staples may be placed to evert the edges of the eyelids and replaced as needed until the puppy is fully grown. A definitive surgery can then be performed if necessary.

How do I care for my animal after the surgery?

Most of the time, your pet will be able to go home on the day of surgery. He/she will

have to stay in a warm and quiet place and be fed with a light meal. He/she will have antibiotics and mild painkillers to take orally after surgery for a few days and may need to wear a buster collar if he/she tries to rub the operating site. An antibiotic ointment will also be prescribed to prevent infection of the eyes and will have to be applied several times a day. The sutures, when present, are removed 10-14 days after the surgery. Because it is often a hereditary condition, affected animals should not be used for breeding.

If you have any further questions do not hesitate to contact the Ophthalmology department at Rutland House Referrals on 01744 853510.