

## **IS MY DOG'S UNDER-EYE TEARING AND STAINING NORMAL?**

Excessive under-eye tearing and staining is the most common reason for initial medical visits for brachiocephalic breeds (Shih Tzu, Bichon Frise, and Maltese). It is almost believed to be “normal” and as common as over or under bites in these breeds. The frequency of such occurrences should not lead to beliefs that these are just breed characteristics. These are true medical conditions that should be avoided in show quality puppies and corrected in any afflicted dog. Tearing and staining can lead to many complications to the eyes and may even end with your pet losing their eyes, if left untreated. Every dog with excessive tearing and staining should be evaluated by a veterinarian to determine if the eye or the eyelid lining are infected, have mechanical/traumatic problems (ingrown hair), or are a result of abnormal development of the eyelids.

The correct flow of tears is directly related to the proper topography of the eyelid margin and the position of the tear duct opening. Together these allow tears to flow into the opening, much like rain water draining to the gutter system on your home. If this does not happen, tears will flow to the lower edge of the eyelids and drain down the face of the dog. The excessive loss of tears causes eye tear glands to overwork and quickly create inflammation and dry eye. Inflammation causes increased redness and blood flow to the eye, which damages red blood cells. Damaged red blood cells will travel down the eye with tears trying to flush the red eye, causing a rusty-red discoloration of the skin and coat. The discoloration appears as the characteristic “dirty face” appearance of your beloved pet.

There are many commercially available washes and drops that will wash or bleach the stains from the dog's face. Such products only correct the symptoms and often irritate the skin around the eyes, ultimately predisposing the area to secondary infection. You can make your pet happy and bright-eyed without constant wiping. There are several surgical procedures that, when properly done, will make your pet look great. This is a maintenance free solution, which will stop your pet from constantly rubbing their eyelids. You can finally put an end to chasing them around to wipe their face yet again!

We do not recommend surgical corrections until your dog's facial development finishes. The earliest corrections can be done are at 6-8 months of age. Most often, we can correct the problem in just one surgical session. In rare instances, a second retouch may be necessary. The drastic change in your pet's behavior and appearance after surgical correction will shock you.

Below are before and after pictures of one of our pets - pictures are worth a thousand words!

Before:



After:





This Shih Tzu required 4 separate procedures performed in just one surgical session to correct his severe drainage problems. But he looks perfect now!

Consider visiting us for an evaluation of your dog's eyes to make sure they are the prettiest they can be. Your pet will absolutely steal your heart (and hopefully many treats!) from the moment they get their eye issues corrected and master their very best sad puppy face. ☺