

# How to Administer Eye Medication to Your Dog

- Many eye conditions in dogs require medicine to be put directly into the eye.
- Follow your veterinarian's recommendations closely.
- Always put health and safety first. If the procedure seems dangerous to you or very painful for your pet, stop and consult your veterinarian.

## The Basics

Many eye conditions in dogs require medicine to be put directly into the eye. This procedure can be relatively easy, as long as you follow a few simple guidelines. The most important guideline is to always put health and safety first. If, for any reason, your dog becomes so agitated that you feel you are at risk of being bitten, stop. If the procedure seems excessively painful for your dog, stop and get your veterinarian's advice.

## Follow Recommendations

The eye is a very delicate structure. It is very important to closely follow your veterinarian's recommendations for medicating your dog's eye. Treating too frequently or too aggressively can make the problem worse, not better. Sensitive, already inflamed parts of the eye can be damaged.

It is important to use only medicines prescribed by a veterinarian and to treat for the full length of time prescribed. Do not stop treatment early, even if the problem seems to be resolved.

## What You Need

- Safe work area
- Eye medication prescribed by your veterinarian
- Moist cotton balls or tissues

## Technique

There are several techniques for applying eye medication. Only one is described here. Ask your veterinarian

to demonstrate application of the prescribed medicine and follow his or her recommendations.

- If necessary, gently restrain or muzzle your dog (*see box*). You may need a helper.
- Using moistened cotton balls or tissues, gently wipe away any discharge from around the eye.
- Hold the affected eye open with the fingers of one hand. If the medication is liquid (eye drops), hold the upper and lower eyelids apart; if the medication is an ointment, gently pull down on the lower eyelid to create a small gap between the lid and the eye.
- With your other hand, gently squeeze the prescribed amount of medicine into the eye. Drops can be applied to the center of the eye or in the gap between the eye and the lower lid; ointment can be placed in the gap. **Do not touch your dog's eye with the medicine container or your fingers.**
- **Note:** If an eye medication requires refrigeration, do not store it at room temperature; however, allow it to reach room temperature before use to make it more comfortable for your pet.
- Either allow your dog to blink to move the medicine across the eye, or, using a very light

## Signs of Eye Trouble

- Excessive tearing
- Discharge
- Red eyelids
- Third eyelid visible
- Squinting or closing eye
- Cloudy or dull-looking eye surface; visible mark on eye surface
- Pawing at face
- Swelling or bulging around, near, or in eye

## Home Care

touch, hold the eye closed for a moment and gently massage.

- Use cotton balls or tissues to gently wipe away any excess medication or discharge.

- Reward your dog with a treat.

**Contact your veterinarian if you have questions or difficulty administering any medication.**

## Restraining Your Dog

Keeping your dog still while you medicate his or her eye is important so that you do not accidentally damage the eye or touch the eye with the medicine container. Here are some tips:

- Place your dog on a stable work surface that you can stand next to, and allow him or her to lie down, either in an upright “sphinx” position or flat on his or her side. While standing next to your dog, put the arm you will use to treat the eye over your dog’s shoulders, and use your upper arm and elbow to press your dog against your torso to help keep him or her still. If necessary, move to your dog’s other side or turn your dog around to treat the other ear.
- If you don’t have a high work surface, you can use the same method while seated on the floor, either holding the front of your dog’s body partially against your body or on your lap. If you have a large dog, you can stand behind your dog and have him or her sit back against your legs. Sometimes it helps to back your dog into a corner.
- Small dogs can be wrapped in a large towel and held against your body, leaving only the head free. Be sure not to wrap your small dog too tightly.
- If your dog struggles, talk to him or her calmly. Stop if he or she becomes extremely agitated.