

Just Like You,



Cats & Dogs Can Suffer

From Cataracts, Too!

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Does your pet

- Bump into walls or furniture?
- Have cloudy-looking eyes?
- Squint or hold the eyes closed?
- Have redness of the eyes?

If so, he or she may have cataracts and should be evaluated by a board-certified veterinary ophthalmologist.

Cataracts are one of the most common problems affecting the eyes of dogs; however, cats can suffer from cataracts too. Most of the time, cataracts are inherited in dogs. Other common causes are some systemic diseases like diabetes, trauma and aging. Like a camera, eyes have a clear lens inside them that is used for focusing. A cataract is any opacity within the lens. The opacity can be small and not interfere with functional vision (incipient) or it can involve more of the lens and cause blurry vision (immature). Eventually, the entire lens can become cloudy, and all vision is lost. This is called a mature cataract.

The word cataract literally means 'to break down.' This breakdown refers to the disruption of the normal arrangement of the lens fibers or its capsule. Cataracts are often white in appearance. Once a lens has developed a cataract, there is no known or proven medical method to make the lens clear again. Cataracts can be treated by surgically removing them. The earlier cataract surgery is performed, the higher the success rate.

Dr. Caroline Betbeze, the board-certified veterinary ophthalmologist at the Veterinary Specialty Center of Tucson, has advanced specialized training and extensive experience in cataract surgery and she is more than happy to consult with you and your pet about this procedure.

The procedures and equipment used to remove cataracts in dogs are the same as those used in

humans. During the procedure, a special probe is used to ultrasonically emulsify and remove the cataract. An artificial lens (intraocular lens) is used to replace the lens. The intraocular lens helps the eye to focus normally following cataract surgery. After successful cataract surgery, your pet should see close to normal. Most pet owners notice a tremendous increase in their pet's vision after cataract surgery. The differences between cataract surgery in dogs and humans is the fact that dogs mount an intense inflammatory response to cataract surgery so you must be willing to treat your pet's eyes with drops and oral medications to control inflammation post-operatively.

Before surgery can be scheduled, Dr. Betbeze must first evaluate the overall health of your pet's eyes. A specialized test of the retina will be performed to ensure that your pet will have the best chance for vision post-operatively. All of the features and benefits of cataract surgery will be discussed at the initial consultation.

Call the Veterinary Specialty Center of Tucson at 520-795-9955 to schedule a consultation with Dr. Caroline Betbeze today.

See what a difference clear vision can make for your pet. ■■

