

EYELASHES LASHING IN:

Eyelid entropion creates uncomfortable eyelash rubbing on the cornea



Overview—“I don’t understand what an entropion correction procedure is; please help me understand the condition and the treatment.”

The anatomical abnormality called “entropion” is the inappropriate rolling in of the eyelid margins; usually this involves the lower eyelid, but can also occur on the upper eyelid. When the skin rolls in, the eyelashes come in contact with the corneal surface of the eyeball. This is both uncomfortable (like having sand in your eye) and damaging to the delicate cornea (resulting in ulcers.)

The treatment is usually a surgical procedure involving the removal of excess skin that allows the edges to roll inward. Once the incisions heal and stitches are removed, the eyelashes rest in a normal position that does not allow them to touch the cornea any longer.

“Why is this procedure being recommended for my pet?”

Prolonged rubbing of eyelashes on the cornea can result in dangerous corneal ulcers, corneal scarring and corneal discoloration—all of which can create problems with vision and eye comfort. Surgery prior to serious corneal damage will eliminate these future problems.

“What options do I have to treat my pet’s problem?”

If an entropion is noted at a very young age (2-4mo) and is minor, time and growth may self-correct the eyelid abnormality with no treatment or just protective eye medications. If it is a major problem at a young age, temporary stitches can be used to keep the eyelids rolled out while the puppy matures.

If the entropion persists into teenage/adult age dogs and cats, surgical correction is the treatment of choice to correct the problem permanently.

“What postoperative complications do I need to know and understand when considering this surgery?”

Complications from surgical correction of entropion are rare and few. The most common is the irritation of suture tag that has rotated out of its original position and is rubbing on the cornea. Early detection of this irritation can be treated with a quick shortening of the suture tag, or suture removal if healing is sufficient.

Another concern with surgical correction is “over” or “under” correction. Removing the “correct” amount of skin to create a functionally ideal and cosmetically pleasing eyelid position is technical but also artistic. The goal is to create ideal, but “under” correction is preferable to “over” correction. A second procedure to touch up a slightly under corrected entropion will still result in ideal. An over corrected entropion is very difficult to bring back to ideal.

“Are there situations when the surgical outcome is not what we hoped it would be?”

The above mentioned under and over correction are less than optimal outcomes. Additional minor touchups may be needed to adjust the eyelid margins.

“How is my pet’s life and lifestyle likely to change after this procedure?”

In general, entropion is a very uncomfortable condition. Surgical correction results in a painfree eye and very happy patients.

“Are there things I can do to prepare myself, my home and/or my pet for this procedure?”

Patients cannot be allowed to rub or paw at their eyes after surgery, but they will be strongly motivated to do so. Supervision and E-collar use is essential to prevent self-trauma in the two-week postoperative period.

Outpatient surgery and anesthesia can be uncomfortable, painful, disorienting, and frustrating experiences for animals; watching your pet work through the early postoperative period and recover from anesthesia and pain medications can be worrisome, scary and frustrating for pet owners. The vast majority of the time this period of difficulty is brief, and *your pet is actually more comfortable and secure at home with you*. Sometimes it doesn’t feel like that at two in the morning when your pet is anxious and not consolable, and you are unsure of what to do. You always have the option of transporting your pet to a 24-hour veterinary facility postoperatively. If you do not want to have your pet home in the first few days postoperatively, please advise your primary care veterinary staff. They will provide contact information for a local 24-hour veterinary facility and help get an estimate for the ongoing care.

It is important that you have proper expectations about this procedure; your experience and you pet’s outcome will benefit greatly. Please discuss this information with your veterinarian when working through the decision-making process regarding **entropion correction**.

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