

Puppy Puzzlers

Swollen Eyes, But Not Open Yet?

Raising the perfect puppy involves watching the eyes when they are still closed. Puppies are born premature compared to other mammals and the eyes are still forming and are prone to infection. A swollen eye or pus coming out of the corner of the eye is infected. They can start with a bacteria or virus, but the pus is bacterial. These are critical issues and quick treatment prevents problems later in life.



The infection causes damage to the lacrimal glands that makes tears, decreasing tear production. Tears protect the eye both physically by lubricating it and with the immune components in tears preventing infection. Lack of tears results in KCS (dry eye), increasing the likelihood of infection and permanent lifelong damage to the eye. Early treatment will prevent permanent scarring of the eye and damage to tear production.

At the first sign of any discharge or swelling under a sealed eyelid, the eye should be opened. A warm cloth on the eye for a few minutes will soften the sealed eye and ease the opening of the eye lid. Flushing the eye removes debris and bacteria as well as wetting the damaged eye, enabling a visual look at the damage. Do not use water here or you may make it worse – use an **eye wash** or a **saline solution** used as a flush works great. After flushing the eye with saline solution or eye wash ([Vetericyn VF Ophthalmic Wash](#) or [Steri Optics Eye Wash](#)) for 5 minutes, examine the eye. On examination, the eye should be clear with no milky look to the cornea. If they are either milky or have vessels coming from the side into the clear corneal area, you need to seek Veterinarian help.

No matter what the look of the eye, you should start treatment of the eye by flushing the eye three times a day and following with an antibiotic for the eye ([Gentamicin Ophthalmic Solution](#) or [Vetericyn Animal Ophthalmic Gel](#)). Don't wait to treat! Start treatment immediately as you don't want them to lose their vision or have scarring in this eye. At this age, if the eye gets damaged it is for life and rarely clears up totally. Quick action will prevent that issue. Always have ophthalmic eye treatment on hand in the kennel for just this type of eye treatment.

Opening the eyes early will not harm them and starting treatment early protects the puppy's vision preventing permanent eye issues later in life.

- Dr. B

The materials, information and answers provided through this article are not intended to replace the medical advice or services of a qualified veterinarian or other pet health care professional. Consult your own veterinarian for answers to specific medical questions, including diagnosis, treatment, therapy or medical attention. Not to be used without permission of Revival Animal Health.