

## CANINE EYELID TUMORS AND CRYOSURGERY

**What are eyelid tumors?** Older dogs very commonly develop small, slowly growing masses on their eyelids. These masses most commonly arise from the eyelid meibomian glands (meibomian gland adenomas or adenocarcinomas) or melanocytes (melanomas), although other cell origins are possible.

**Should eye tumors be treated?** Canine eyelid tumors are generally benign in that they are unlikely to spread to other places in your dog's body or injure the eye. However, eyelid tumors may become inflamed, producing pain like what most people experience with a "stye." Additionally, larger masses rub on the eye, interfere with normal blinking, and produce tearing.

**What should be done?** Eyelid tumors may be safely excised following a local anesthetic injection into the eyelid. General anesthesia is not necessary in most cases. To prevent a recurrence of the eyelid tumor, the surgery site is frozen with a liquid nitrogen cryosurgery probe.

**What is cryosurgery?** Cryosurgery is the local application of extreme cold in order to kill tissues. Normal eyelid structures are relatively resistant to injury by freezing; however, eyelid tumors are quite sensitive to freezing.

**What should I expect after eyelid cryosurgery?** You may notice a small amount of blood in the tears for 2-3 days, and the surgery site will be swollen for 7-10 days. Within 2 weeks the surgery site will turn pink due to the loss of melanocytes. You may notice whitening of the hairs surrounding the surgery site. In most cases, the skin will repigment within 4 months, but the hair whitening may be permanent.

**Will the eyelid tumor come back?** Approximately 10-15% of eyelid tumors recur within 6 months of treatment. If you notice a tumor on your dog's eyelid in the future, it may be a recurrence of the original tumor or it may be a completely new tumor. The treatment is the same: excision and cryosurgery.