

## **LENS-INDUCED UVEITIS**

Uveitis refers to an inflammation (irritation) of the part of the eye that supplies blood to the eye. When the blood vessels become irritated, blood cells and debris leak out and result in cloudiness. People with uveitis report having a tremendous headache. Clinical signs of uveitis include: cloudiness, redness, tearing, squinting, bleeding into the eye, and loss of vision.

In your pet's case, the underlying cause of the uveitis is cataract formation. The lens is made up of layers of cells like an onion, and the innermost proteins were formed during fetal development. Due to the cataractous changes in the lens, some of these lens proteins have leaked out of the lens into the eye. The immune system of the eye does not recognize these lens proteins and tries to protect the eye from this "foreign" material by mounting an attack. The immune response results in intraocular inflammation and irritation.

If left untreated, lens-induced uveitis can lead to scar tissue, retinal disease, glaucoma, or permanent blindness. The development of any of these conditions could make cataract surgery impossible. Treatment for lens-induced uveitis is aimed at reducing the inflammation and preventing the complications. Surgical removal of the cataract will remove the underlying cause of the uveitis, but in order to avoid post-operative complications, cataract surgery is not attempted until the uveitis is well under control. The treatment protocol varies for each patient but often includes a steroid eye medicine to decrease the inflammation.

Changes can happen very quickly in patients with lens-induced uveitis and you should not hesitate to call us with new information about your pet's eye. This disease can easily result in permanent blindness.