

Pawsitive Press

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Ophthalmic (Eye) Exams

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What is an eye exam?
An ophthalmic or eye exam can include a variety of tests depending on the problem with the eye(s). The exam evaluates the globe and the surrounding tissues. Exams are generally non-invasive and painless. Eye exams can help identify problems with the eyes or underlying diseases that affect the eyes.



Who performs the eye exam?
A general practice veterinarian or by a veterinary ophthalmologist (veterinarian who specializes in ophthalmology).

When and why should pets have eye exams?
During every physical examination the eyes are examined. In some cases more diagnostics are needed such as if your pet; has an abnormal appearance to one or both eyes; is showing pain (squinting, holding the eye shut, or rubbing at the eyes); has an eye injury or if you believe your pet has lost their vision.



What happens during an eye exam?

During an eye exam vision is evaluated. The veterinarian will evaluate how your pet navigates around the room. The veterinarian will examine if the pet will blink when a finger comes towards the eye. This is evaluating the menace response. The veterinarian will examine a pet's pupils in a test called pupillary light reflex test. This evaluates the muscles controlling the iris, the nerves and the part of the brain responsible for vision. The tissue that surrounds the eye, the eyelids, and the eye itself will be examined. They are checked for inflammation, growths, foreign material, pigmentation, and any changes with the the lens.

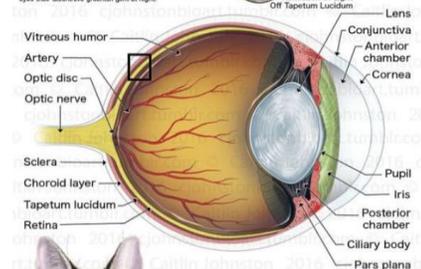
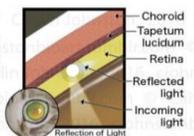
What diagnostics are used?
Based on the need of the pet different testing is available. It is common for pets to scratch their cornea. This can be painful and these scratches are not always

visible to the naked eye. The diagnostic chosen in this case is a **fluorescein stain test**. This is a green dye that is placed into the eye and any scratch in the cornea will take up the dye. In some cases your veterinarian may be concerned about your pet's tear production. The diagnostic chosen in this case is a **Schirmer tear test**. This is a small strip of paper that is placed in the lower eyelid and held in place for 60 seconds. This test helps to determine if there is adequate tear production or if medical intervention is needed. Pets can develop glaucoma, which is high eye pressure. Glaucoma can be inherited or caused by an underlying disease. The diagnostics chosen to check pressures is **Applanation tonometry or Tonopen**. Before the tonopen is used your veterinarian will place a few drops onto the eye to numb the surface. The tonopen will provide the veterinarian with eye pressure readings.

Feline Eye Anatomy

A cat's eye is specially adapted to help cats be effective hunters. Cats mainly hunt during the morning and evening hours, so their eyes are designed to help them see clearly in dim to almost no light situations. The thick lens inside their eye cannot easily focus on close objects, so they mainly use their eyes for stalking prey from afar and use the sensitive whiskers on their face and paws to sense their prey's location during the final pounce.

The tapetum lucidum is a thin, iridescent layer of the eye located behind the retina and in front of the choroid layer. This layer is found in most vertebrates but is lacking in humans. The tapetum enhances a cat's vision in low light by reflecting and magnifying light back into the retina. The tapetum lucidum is also green in cats that have distinctive green eyes at night.



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