



Eye Care for Pugs

Protecting One of a Pug's Most Vulnerable Features

A pug's large, expressive eyes are one of the breed's most beloved characteristics. Unfortunately, those prominent eyes are also one of their greatest health vulnerabilities.

Because pug eyes sit more forward in the skull than many other breeds, they are more susceptible to injury, irritation, and disease. Understanding basic eye care and recognizing problems early can help prevent pain, vision loss, and costly veterinary treatment.

Why Are Pug Eyes More Vulnerable?

Pugs were bred to have large, prominent eyes and short muzzles. As a result:

- Their eyes are less protected by the surrounding facial structure.
- They may not blink as completely as other breeds.
- Their eyes are more exposed to dust, debris, grass, and injury.
- They are more prone to dry eye and corneal ulcers.

Even minor eye problems can become serious quickly, which is why prompt attention is so important.

What Healthy Pug Eyes Should Look Like

Healthy eyes should be:

- ✓ Bright and clear
- ✓ Fully open and comfortable

- ✓ Free of redness
- ✓ Free of excessive discharge
- ✓ Moist but not excessively watery
- ✓ Symmetrical in appearance

A small amount of clear tearing or morning eye discharge can be normal, but changes should be monitored.

Common Eye Problems in Pugs

Corneal Ulcers

A corneal ulcer is a scratch or injury to the surface of the eye.

Causes may include:

- Rough play
- Cat scratches
- Running through brush or tall grass
- Dry eye
- Foreign material in the eye

Signs include:

- Squinting
- Excessive tearing
- Redness
- Pawing at the eye
- Cloudy appearance

Corneal ulcers are painful and can worsen rapidly. Veterinary evaluation should be sought as soon as possible.

Dry Eye (Keratoconjunctivitis Sicca)

Some pugs do not produce enough tears to keep their eyes healthy and lubricated.

Signs may include:

- Thick discharge
- Red eyes
- Frequent blinking
- Dull or dry-looking eyes
- Recurrent eye infections

Dry eye is usually a lifelong condition that can often be managed successfully with prescription medications and regular monitoring.

Pigmentary Keratitis

Pigmentary keratitis is a common condition in pugs where dark pigment gradually develops on the surface of the eye.

This condition may result from:

- Chronic irritation
- Dry eye
- Eyelid abnormalities
- Long-term inflammation

Over time, pigment can interfere with vision if left untreated.

Eye Injuries

Because pug eyes are prominent, injuries can occur more easily than many owners realize.

Potential causes include:

- Playing with other pets
- Tree branches
- Shrubs and landscaping
- Grooming accidents
- Rough handling

Any sudden squinting or eye discomfort should be treated seriously.

Warning Signs That Require Veterinary Attention

Contact your veterinarian if you notice:

- 🚨 Squinting
- 🚨 Redness
- 🚨 Excessive tearing
- 🚨 Thick yellow or green discharge
- 🚨 Cloudiness
- 🚨 Swelling around the eye
- 🚨 Pawing or rubbing the eye
- 🚨 Sudden vision changes
- 🚨 One eye appearing different from the other

Eye problems can progress quickly, and delays in treatment may lead to permanent damage.

Daily Eye Care Tips

Check Eyes Regularly

Take a few seconds each day to look at your pug's eyes.

You're looking for:

- Redness
- Discharge
- Cloudiness
- Squinting
- Changes from normal appearance

Early detection often leads to easier treatment.

Keep Facial Folds Clean

Moisture and debris around facial wrinkles can contribute to irritation.

Use a soft cloth or veterinarian-approved wipe to gently clean facial folds as needed and keep them dry afterward.

Groom Carefully

When trimming facial hair or cleaning around the face:

- Avoid pointed scissors near the eyes.
 - Work slowly and carefully.
 - Consider professional grooming if needed.
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Protect Eyes During Outdoor Activities

When walking:

- Avoid dense brush when possible.
 - Be mindful of low branches.
 - Monitor for signs of irritation after outdoor adventures.
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Never Use Human Eye Medications Without Veterinary Guidance

Many over-the-counter human eye products can be inappropriate—or even dangerous—for dogs.

Never use:







- Steroid eye medications
- Prescription eye drops
- Redness-relief products

unless specifically directed by your veterinarian.

Understanding Eye Emergencies

Some eye problems require immediate care.

Seek emergency veterinary attention if your pug:

-  Suddenly cannot open an eye
-  Has a visibly injured eye
-  Experiences sudden cloudiness
-  Has significant swelling
-  Appears to lose vision
-  Has an eye that appears to be protruding abnormally

Prompt treatment can often save vision and reduce pain.

Partner With Your Veterinarian

Regular veterinary examinations are an important part of maintaining eye health.

Your veterinarian may recommend:

- Tear production testing
- Eye pressure testing
- Prescription eye medications
- Referral to a veterinary ophthalmologist for specialized care

Early treatment is often the key to preserving comfort and vision.

Living Well With a Pug's Eyes

Most eye conditions can be successfully managed when identified early. By performing routine checks, keeping the face clean, and seeking prompt veterinary care when concerns arise, you can help protect your pug's vision for years to come.

Those big, beautiful pug eyes deserve a little extra attention—and they will reward you with a lifetime of love, personality, and unforgettable expressions.

Pug Rescue of Florida & Georgia

Helping pugs see a brighter future through education, prevention, and compassionate care.