

Distichiasis and Entropion

The two most common eye issues GSMD are faced with are Entropion and Distichiasis, with non-symptomatic Distichiasis being the most common issue GSMD face. While there are many vets well qualified to handle both of these problems, other vets choose to refer these cases to a Veterinary Ophthalmologist.

Distichiasis (reported at 19% in the breed) can be nothing to worry about, or it can be a bit trickier. In the vast majority of cases, Distichiasis is non-symptomatic and never causes an issue for the dog. Distichiasis is the presence of extra eyelashes along the eyelid and should not be confused with entropion. The distichia (extra eyelashes) can be seen along the eyelid, but occasionally a magnifying lens is needed to see them. Sometimes extra eyelashes grow in such a manner that they irritate the eye. Unfortunately, symptomatic cases do require attention from a vet. Treatment will vary from vet to vet, some choosing to freeze the affected hair follicles, and others choosing to use electrocautery. Regardless of the treatment, symptomatic distichiasis can cause major eye irritation if not attended to. Dogs that appear to be “squinting” should be examined by a veterinarian.

Entropion (found in about 3% of the breed) is the rolling in of the eyelids, which causes the eyelashes to irritate the eye. Entropion is a condition that most often requires surgery to fix, but once fixed causes no future issues for the dog. Entropion is not a common issue in the GSMD, but is occasionally seen. Thankfully it is simple to fix and is not an ongoing issue.

