

## **Retinal Detachment**

The retina is a thin membrane in the back of the eye. In order to function normally and send visual impulses to the brain, the retina must remain attached and be in good health. The impulses from the retina are transmitted through the optic nerve to the brain. Most animals with retinal detachment present with sudden onset of blindness in one or both eyes. Retinal detachment may occur due to trauma, degeneration, bleeding, cancer or inflammatory disease.

The treatment of retinal detachment depends on the underlying cause, and therefore further testing including blood tests, blood pressure measurement, ultrasonography or lymph node biopsy may be indicated.

*The most commonly identified causes of retinal detachment seen at the Animal Eye Clinic include:*

- Cats : high blood pressure (arterial hypertension), inflammation (uveitis).
- Dogs: inflammation (uveitis), neoplasia (cancer), surgery associated (after cataract surgery), inherited predisposition (Shih Tzu, Bichon Frise), bleeding disorders (autoimmune, tick-borne disease), trauma.
- Horses: trauma, inflammation (uveitis).

The retina may remain viable (alive) for several weeks following detachment, although the prognosis is better if the retina reattaches quickly. Depending on the type of retinal detachment, medical and/or surgical treatment may be indicated. Surgical treatment includes vitrectomy and retinal reattachment surgery. Surgery for retinal detachment is costly and includes the use of expensive equipment, many disposable items and remains a technically challenging surgery offered at very few veterinary ophthalmology clinics.

As an owner it is important to realize that the goal of any medical and/or surgical treatment is reattachment of the retina. Should the retina reattach, visual function may return, or the eye may remain blind.

Should you have any further questions about *Retinal detachment* or the treatment of your animal, call our office and ask to speak to Dr. Clinton or Dr. Evans.