



Eosinophilic Keratitis

What is eosinophilic keratitis?

Eosinophilic keratitis is a condition in which there is inflammation of the cornea (the normally clear surface of the eye) characterized by blood vessel in-growth into the cornea and white or light pink plaques on the surface of the cornea. Eosinophilic keratitis only occurs in cats. This condition is thought to be due to an immune response, similar to an allergy, often associated with feline herpes virus, a viral infection that is common in cats and can cause a variety of eye problems.

What are the signs of eosinophilic keratitis?

Cats with eosinophilic keratitis often exhibit redness and cloudiness of the eye, increased eye discharge, and signs of ocular discomfort, including squinting or pawing at the eye.

How is eosinophilic keratitis diagnosed?

A presumptive diagnosis of eosinophilic keratitis can often be made based on the characteristic findings on ophthalmic examination. However, confirmation of the diagnosis is made by collecting a small sample of cells from the affected area of the cornea to evaluate under a microscope. This sample can easily be collected using a topical anesthetic and a small, soft brush that is wiped across the cornea. Samples from cats with eosinophilic keratitis will contain a specific type of inflammatory cell called an eosinophil.

What is the treatment?

Eosinophilic keratitis is most often treated with a topical steroid, often also with a topical anti-viral medication to help control any underlying feline herpes viral infection. In some cats, treatment with an oral immuno-suppressive medication is also necessary.

What is the prognosis?

Most cats with eosinophilic keratitis respond well to treatment, with control of the condition often occurring within a period of weeks. Many cats, though, experience recurrences of this condition and require ongoing or intermittent treatment to maintain control of the disease.