

KEEP AN "EYE" ON IT!

We consider many conditions of the eye as potentially an equine emergency requiring prompt attention. If your horse appears to suddenly have a painful eye, please call us.



Signs to note are:

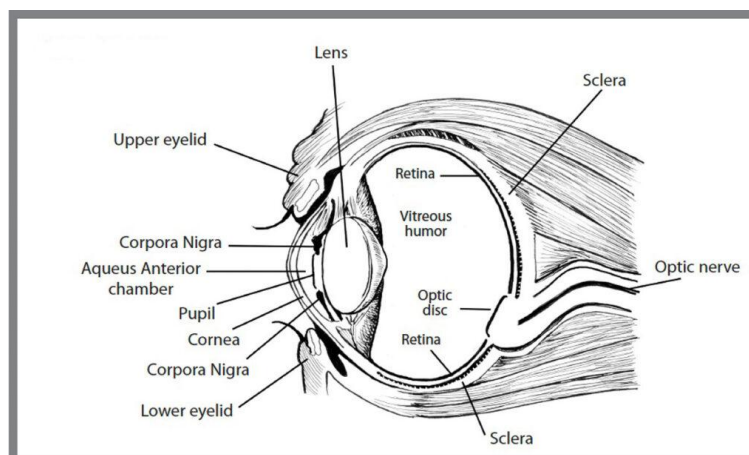
- A closed eye
- Excessive blinking – blepharospasm
- Excessive tear production – epiphora
- Swollen eyelids
- Red and inflamed tissue around the eye
- Purulent discharge
- Cloudiness of the eye – corneal oedema

The main three acute conditions we would be thinking about are:

- Conjunctivitis
- Corneal ulceration/abscess
- Uveitis

There are obviously many other eye problems which tend to be slower in onset.

Anatomy of Horse eye



Initial examination

In most cases our examination will require sedation and popping in a couple of nerve blocks to numb the eye lids. A green dye, fluorescein is instilled into the eye which allows us to detect any corneal ulceration

A bright light source is used to examine the front of the eye while an ophthalmoscope is needed to fully assess the retina and lens.

CONJUNCTIVITIS

In these cases, the eye or orbit itself is unaffected but there may be a watery or purulent discharge, with inflammation of the conjunctiva. This is often seen in the summer months when flies spread infection. Irritants and allergic reactions will also affect the conjunctiva. It is important to rule out corneal ulceration as may be secondary to the horse rubbing the eye.

We will prescribe antibiotics drops or ointment and pain relief if needed.

CORNEAL ULCERATION

This is usually due to trauma, abrasion or penetration. The depth of the ulcer will determine how serious it is and how much it will lead to complications.

Superficial ulcers should heal in a few days. We will prescribe antibiotics to prevent infection and pain relief and advise a revisit to check it has healed.

Deeper ulcers can lead to uveitis and are more challenging to treat.

Stromal abscesses will need swabbing and the correct antibiotic prescribed

UVEITIS

This is an inflammatory condition involving the inner structures of the eye. It causes significant pain. The eye may not look too bad on inspection, the upper lid will be little droopy with the lashes pointing downwards, there may be swelling and increased lacrimation. Alternatively, the eye may be closed, swollen and cloudy.

Uveitis may be triggered by trauma, such as deep ulcer or penetration, infection or be immune mediated. It can affect one or both eyes, is challenging to treat and frequently recurs. If not controlled can ultimately lead to enucleation.

Initial treatment involves pain relief, topical steroids and atropine to dilate the pupil.

If response to treatment is not as we would hope, we are able to arrange a specialist ophthalmologist to come to Summerleaze and examine your horse and advise further treatment options



Photo of stromal abscess



Photo of Corneal ulceration



Photo of uveitis

Client Meeting – First Aid

Worried about wound? Exasperated by eyes? Bamboozled by bandages?

Then join us for our next client evening on equine first aid. On the 6th May at Hitts barton EX5 2NY

7pm for a half 7 start

Open to all!

Please bring a chair refreshments will be provided.

To sign up please email summerleaze@summerleaze-vets.co.uk or ring us on 01297304007

Contact us: 01297 304007

Email: summerleaze@summerleaze-vets.co.uk

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