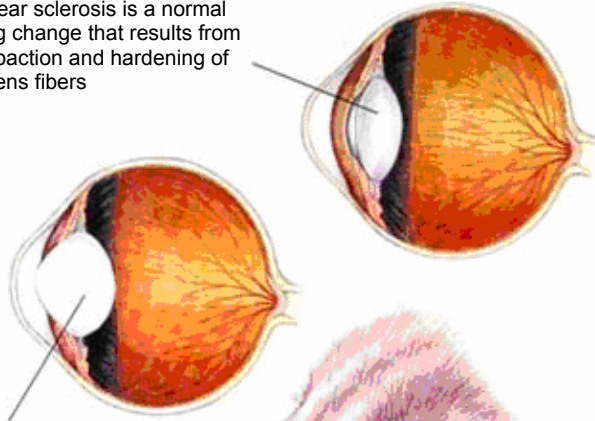




Nuclear sclerosis is a normal aging change that results from compaction and hardening of the lens fibers



A cataract is an opacity of the Lens fibers or capsule



## **Nuclear Sclerosis/Cataracts**

### **Diagnostic Plan**

History  
Physical examination  
Ophthalmic examination  
Blood Work  
Urinalysis

### **Therapeutic Plan**

Surgery  
Therapy for any concurrent disease  
No therapy is necessary for nuclear sclerosis

### **Nutritional Plan**

Nutrition based on individual patient evaluation including body condition and other organ system involvement or disease

## **Nuclear Sclerosis and Cataracts**

Your pet has nuclear sclerosis or cataracts. Nuclear sclerosis is a normal aging change of the eye. Cataracts are painless opacities of the lens that cause loss of vision. Nuclear sclerosis requires no therapy. Cataracts are removed surgically. This client education sheet will help you learn more about these changes and will review your veterinarian's instructions for your pet's care at home, as well as follow-up with the veterinary health care team.

### **What You Should Know About Nuclear Sclerosis and Cataracts**

Nuclear sclerosis is a normal aging change that occurs in older pets. The change occurs in both eyes and is seen as a bluish-gray translucent haze. Nuclear sclerosis results from compaction and hardening of the lens fibers. Dogs and cats with nuclear sclerosis may have better vision in dim light than in bright light.

A cataract is a partial or complete opacity on or in the lens. Cataracts, which may involve one or both eyes, impair vision or cause blindness.

#### **Causes**

Cataracts are either developmental or degenerative. In dogs and cats, hereditary influencers account for most cataracts (development). Early cataract development occurs most often in Poodles, Cocker Spaniels, Wirehaired Fox Terriers, Miniature Schnauzers, Boston Terriers, and Afghan Hounds.

Degenerative cataracts result from any disease process that alters the structure or metabolism of the lens. These processes include diabetes, wounds that perforate the eyeball, radiation, toxins, eyeball infections, and dietary deficiencies.

#### **Diagnosis**

A diagnosis of cataracts is confirmed by your veterinarian when he or she examines your pet's eyes. Blood and urine tests will help diagnose concurrent diseases such as diabetes.

## Treatment and Home Care

The treatment for cataracts is surgical removal. Removal may restore vision and prevent complications, such as internal eye infections, lens displacement, and glaucoma. Cataract surgery is often delayed until both eyes are affected. Before deciding to perform surgery, your veterinarian will try to determine if another eye disease is present. It would do little good to remove cataracts to improve a pet's vision if, for example, the pet was completely blind because of retinal disease.

Home care after surgery is aimed at maintaining dilated pupils and controlling inflammation within the eye. Eye drop medications prescribed by your veterinarian must be administered as instructed if the cataract surgery is to be successful. Sutures in the eye need to be removed several days after surgery, according to your veterinarian's instructions.

Some animals will have improved vision immediately after surgery; others may require an adjustment period before the success of the surgery can be evaluated.

If your pet has diabetes, you may need to administer insulin according to your veterinarian's instructions.

## Nutritional Plan

Because nuclear sclerosis occurs most often in older dogs and cats, your veterinarian may recommend a dietary change for your pet. Optimal nutrition for older pets provides for the pet's needs, but more important, reduces the health risks associated with feeding excess sodium, phosphorus, protein, and calories. Foods that avoid these harmful excesses and provide proper nutrition for older pets include Hill's® Science Diet® Senior for dogs and cats and Hill's® Prescription Diet® Canine and Feline k/d® and g/d®.

If your pet is diabetic, your veterinarian may give you special feeding instructions. Overweight diabetics should be fed a food with reduced calories and increased fiber to promote weight loss. Such foods include Hill's® Prescription Diet® Canine and Feline r/d®. Studies indicate that fixed-formula foods high in fiber and carbohydrates lower a pet's insulin requirements and help maintain normal blood sugar levels. Therefore, foods such as Hill's® Prescription Diet® Canine and Feline w/d® should be fed to nonobese diabetic animals.

## Transitioning Food

Unless recommended otherwise by your veterinarian, gradually introduce any new food over a seven-day period. Mix the new food with your pet's former food, gradually increasing its proportion until only the new food is fed.

If your pet is one of the few that doesn't readily accept a new food, try warming the canned food to body temperature, hand feeding for the first few days, or mixing the dry food with warm water (wait ten minutes before serving). However, do not add water to your cat's food. Feed only the recommended diet. Do not feed additional salt or any snacks that may contain sodium. Be patient but firm with your pet.

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*Presented as an educational service by*

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## Home Care Instructions

Client's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Patient's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Medication(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Nutritional Recommendation: \_\_\_\_\_

Follow-Up Appointment: \_\_\_\_\_

(Hospital Stamp Area Above)

REGULAR VISITS WILL HELP OUR VETERINARY HEALTH CARE TEAM PROVIDE FOR YOUR PET'S BEST INTEREST.