

CAVALIER KING CHARLES SPANIELS

EYE CARE

Cavalier King Charles spaniels have large prominent eyes that instill much of the soft wonderful look they are known for in the dog world. These big beautiful eyes can benefit from a little extra care to look their best. As with most "bug eyed" dogs, Cavaliers are susceptible to irritation in windy and dusty environments as exhibited by increased tearing. Cavaliers also seem to tear more as a puppy and especially during teething.

Care should be taken to protect the eyes especially during bathing. This can be done either by not washing the face with soap or by putting in a small amount of a protective bland eye preparation designed for this purpose. These products are frequently mineral oil based and available from most pet catalogs or in pet stores. One example is Genteal lubricating eye gel. This can also be used preventively when using dryers or if they will be out in the wind. "Normal" tearing should always be thin and clear and not thick and cloudy. A red eye with purulent drainage and squinting denotes something more serious and will need professional veterinary consultation.

Especially if showing your Cavalier, most of us have faced the question of how to clear up the stains that can occur under the eyes. These stains are the byproduct of bacteria living in that moist environment. There are MANY products on the market that proclaim to solve this problem. I have a cabinet full of them and can say that at best they decrease the staining but do not eliminate it. Generally with patience most Cavaliers outgrow the problem. If selecting a product to try, be very careful. Some products can be very irritating if they get IN the eye. Many people wash with plain water. I personally like Absolutely Natural Grooming Aid as it seems more effective than water and is safe. This is by no means the only option. Some members have mentioned using Visine AROUND the eye for cleaning. Some have expressed success with giving the dog Roloids. I have no personal experience with this technique but it sounds worth a try. When wiping the eye, wipe up so as to avoid spreading the moisture and the stain. Also do not use Kleenex, as the dust from this can aggravate the problem. It is preferred to use a gauze pad or wash cloth. If stain removal is an absolute priority you can speak to your vet about short-term use of antibiotics orally.

Pat Grice 8/2003