



By your veterinary ophthalmologist

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Caring for a blind pet

After your pet loses his/her vision, there will be an initial adjustment period and you will need to follow a few guidelines in order to keep your pet safe. Blind pets will utilize their senses of hearing and smell making the loss of vision less traumatic when compared to the loss of vision in people and they will usually adapt very well. Bumping into things and some disorientation may be experienced initially, but this will improve with time. The majority of blind pets will memorize the layout of their home and yard and can function normally or near normally with poor or no vision. It does take time for them to memorize their surroundings and to learn to get around using their other senses, but they usually make very happy pets with some help from you to make their lives easier.

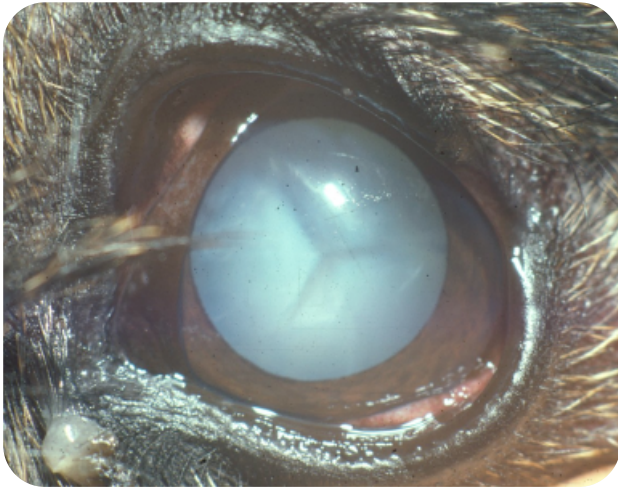


Protective apparatus in a dog
makes the eye not visible in a dog

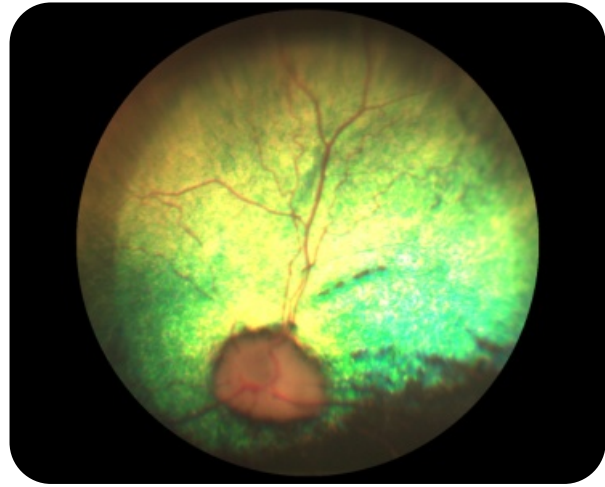
Try to keep their environment as stable as possible; this includes furniture as well as their food and water bowls. Be careful of stairways, open doors, or other objects that could injure your pet. If you have children, it's important to teach them to pick up after themselves. Things that are left out will cause your pet to bump into them and may lead to disorientation or injury. If your pet is placed in a new environment, give him or her time to adjust to the new surroundings. Encourage your pet to use its' other senses to compensate for vision loss by playing with toys that make noise.

Teach your pet to walk on a harness or lead so it can be exercised safely. Encourage exercise, whether in a front yard or on a leash, to prevent excessive weight gain. Never let your pet out without supervision, unless it is in a fenced yard. Be careful of in-ground pools and spas even though your pet can swim; they will not be able to find their way out. When approaching other dogs

remember your pet can no longer read the other dog's body language and will not be able to recognize signs of aggression or fear. Always supervise your blind pet when interacting with other animals. Some behavioral changes (aggression, depression, fear) can sometimes be observed with sudden blindness. Instruct family members (especially children) to vocalize the pet's name and approach him or her slowly. This fear usually passes with time as the pet learns to adjust to the blindness. Your pet will have a normal lifespan and can continue to have a good quality of life as a blind animal.



A mature cataract (opacification of the lens) makes the eye not visual in a dog



A atrophy of the retina (death)