

TEAR STAINING IN DOGS

WHAT PET OWNERS SHOULD KNOW

Tear staining is a very common issue in dogs. In most cases, it's not a medical concern, but it can be frustrating from a cosmetic standpoint. However, because tear staining can sometimes signal an underlying health issue, it's always a good idea to discuss it with your veterinarian.

WHAT CAUSES TEAR STAINING IN DOGS?

Tear stains are caused by **porphyrins**, which are iron-containing molecules produced when red blood cells break down. These molecules are found in a dog's tears, saliva, and urine.

When tears sit on the fur around the eyes, porphyrins can leave behind a reddish-brown discoloration, especially noticeable on light-colored coats.

While tear stains are often harmless, several factors can contribute to their development.

COMMON CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

- **Breed and eye shape:** Dogs with shallow eye sockets or facial folds (like brachycephalic breeds) may trap moisture and debris more easily
- **Excess tearing:** Often caused by irritation or allergies
- **Blocked tear ducts:** Prevent proper tear drainage
- **Environmental factors:** Dust, pollen, or other irritants

POSSIBLE MEDICAL CAUSES

- Tear duct blockage (leading to epiphora)
- Allergies (food, environmental, etc.)
- Eye infections
- Abnormal eyelash growth (distichiasis)
- Eyelid abnormalities (such as entropion)
- Inflammation
- Dental disease
- Ear infections

DOGS MORE PRONE TO TEAR STAINING



Boston Terriers



Maltese



Shih Tzu



Pekingese



Bulldogs



Boxers



Poodles



Bichon Frise



Cocker Spaniels



Havanese



Lhasa Apso



Pomeranians



Poodle Mixes



Light/white fur

*Please note this is not a comprehensive list. Tear staining can affect dogs of any breed or color. The following are some of the breeds/colors most commonly affected.

HOW TO REMOVE TEAR STAINS IN DOGS

1 KEEP THE EYE AREA TRIMMED

Short hair helps prevent moisture buildup. If your dog is wiggly, consider having a professional groomer or your veterinarian assist.

2 USE A TEAR STAIN REMOVER

High-quality products help break down porphyrins and reduce bacteria buildup (**Ocryl®** is a cost-effective option). Consistency is key—results won't happen overnight.

3 SWITCH TO FILTERED WATER

Minerals and additives in tap water may contribute to staining in some dogs. Filtered water can sometimes help reduce tearing.

HOW TO PREVENT TEAR STAINS FROM COMING BACK

Once stains are under control, regular maintenance can help keep them from returning:

- Use a tear remover 1–2 times per week (or as directed)
- Keep hair around the eyes neatly trimmed
- Maintain good overall hygiene, especially around
- the face



Tear staining is usually harmless, but it's important to rule out any underlying issues—especially if the staining appears suddenly or worsens over time. Consulting your veterinarian can help ensure the best care plan for your pet. Keep in mind that what works for one dog may not work for another, so some trial and error may be necessary to find the best solution.



Ocryl® Ocular Cleanser helps keep pets' eyes clean, comfortable, and free of unsightly buildup. Formulated to gently remove crust, debris, and tear stains, Ocryl® also helps reduce discoloration around the eyes while supporting a healthy ocular environment. Easy to incorporate into daily care routines, Ocryl® is a simple solution for maintaining eye hygiene, reducing tear staining and promoting ocular comfort in dogs and cats.