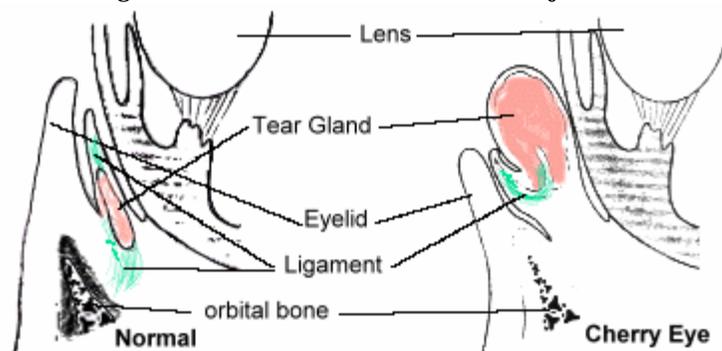


Cherry Eye

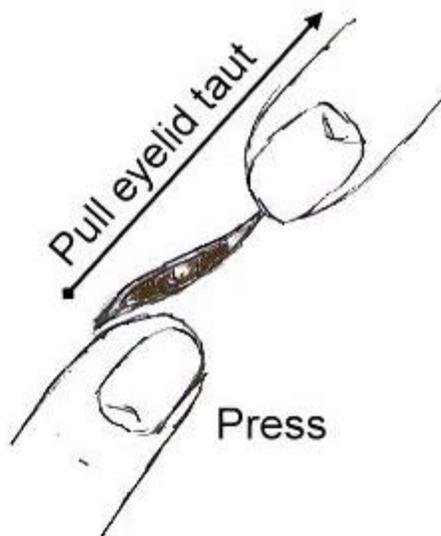
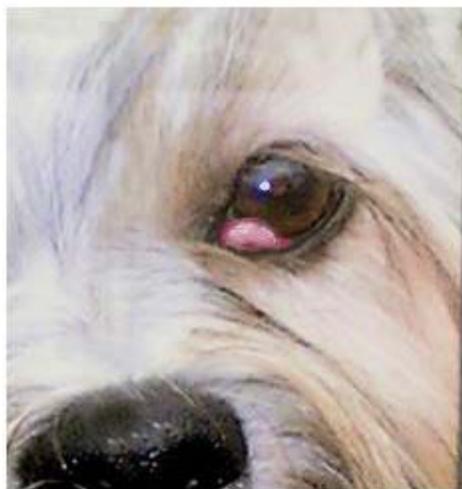
by Dr. Catherine Marley

Cherry Eye is an inflammation of the Harderian Gland, an accessory tear gland of the conjunctiva inside the lower eyelid. It occurs in eyes that have a poorly developed ligament holding the gland in position. The gland is contained within a fold of conjunctiva commonly called the "third eyelid". Normally the lower pole of gland is anchored to the connective tissue inside the bony orbital rim. In the abnormal eye, the inferior ligament is absent or poorly developed. When the gland becomes inflamed and swollen, it flips up from under the "third eyelid" and herniates from under the lower eyelid, (see the figure below.)

Through repeated inflammation and herniation, this condition is associated with the development of "dry eye" or kerato-conjunctivitis sicca. Surgery can restore the gland to its proper position. Removal of the gland can precipitate "dry eye" and so should be avoided. Relatively small, almond shaped eyes whose structures are well supported by the infraorbital malar complex (cheekbones) are rarely subject to cherry eye. Breeders should select stock with healthy eye conformation, and prospective owners should look for a small almond eye when purchasing a puppy.



Manual reduction of herniated gland



Occasionally the gland will swell and herniate acutely from allergy, injury or infection. If your dog does develop a cherry eye, it is important to reduce it as soon as possible to avoid drying and further injury which can turn an acute herniation into a chronic one.

You can often replace the gland into its normal position under the "third eyelid" membrane by a simple manual

maneuver. While stretching the eyelid in a superior lateral direction, put gentle but firm pressure on the medial lower lid as indicated in the figure. This maneuver will generally work on cherry eyes that have been present for less than 24 hours, and are not very large or infected. Antibiotic drops should be used for about 48 hours following replacement of the gland.