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Non-Healing Corneal Ulcer

What is a non-healing corneal ulcer? Non-healing corneal ulcers are superficial abrasions on the surface of the eye that fail to heal after 7-10 days.

What causes a non-healing corneal ulcer? Non-healing ulcers are due to an abnormality of the corneal epithelium of the eye. This abnormal epithelium cannot stick to the surface of the eye following a minor injury. The epithelium simply peels off like a sunburn.

Are certain breeds of dogs prone to developing a non-healing ulcer? Yes. Boxers are commonly affected, but any dog may develop a non-healing corneal ulcer.

How is a non-healing ulcer diagnosed? A veterinary ophthalmologist can frequently diagnose a non-healing ulcer based solely upon your pet's history and the appearance of the eye. When a Q-tip is gently wiped across of surface of the anesthetized eye, the abnormal epithelium will easily peel away.

What should be done? Most non-healing erosions require surgery to promote healing: Following light intravenous sedation and application of anesthetic eye drops, a corneal debridement and a grid keratotomy are performed. The abnormal corneal epithelium is gently removed from the eye, and corneal surface is lightly scratched. These light scratches serve as anchor points for the healing corneal epithelium. A local anesthetic is injected into the eyelids enabling a suture to be placed to temporarily close the eyelids (partially) to act as a bandage. Eight out of 10 dogs will heal within 14-21 days.

Will non-healing ulcers recur? Unfortunately, yes. Most dogs with a non-healing ulcer will have a recurrence in either eye at a later date. There are no reliable measures to prevent a recurrence.

Please schedule a re-evaluation with Dr.Chavkin 14-21 days.