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Horner's Syndrome

What is Horner's Syndrome?

Horner's syndrome is loss of sympathetic nerve supply to the eye, eyelids, and muscles that dilate the pupil. The sympathetic nerves are part of the nervous system that control "automatic" body functions.

How can I tell if my pet has Horner's Syndrome?

The signs associated with Horner's Syndrome are usually unilateral (one-sided). They include, drooping of the upper eyelid, constriction of the pupil, sinking of the eye, and elevation of the third eyelid.

What causes Horner's Syndrome?

In most cases, the cause of Horner's Syndrome is idiopathic, or unknown. However, anything that can create a disruption in the nervous pathway can cause Horner's Syndrome i.e. trauma/injury, infection, and tumors.

How is Horner's Syndrome Diagnosed?

Horner's Syndrome diagnosis is based upon the clinical signs found during an ophthalmic and a neurologic exam. A phenylephrine test is used to confirm the diagnosis. Causes of Horner's Syndrome due to problems within the brain, spinal cord, and chest may require further testing to find the location and cause of the problem. Treatment is then based on these test results.

How is Horner's Syndrome treated?

For most dogs, the signs associated with idiopathic Horner's Syndrome will resolve within 6 months.

Is Horner's Syndrome Painful? No.

Does Horner's Syndrome interfere with vision?

In some cases Horner's Syndrome will interfere with vision because the eye is covered by the third eyelid.