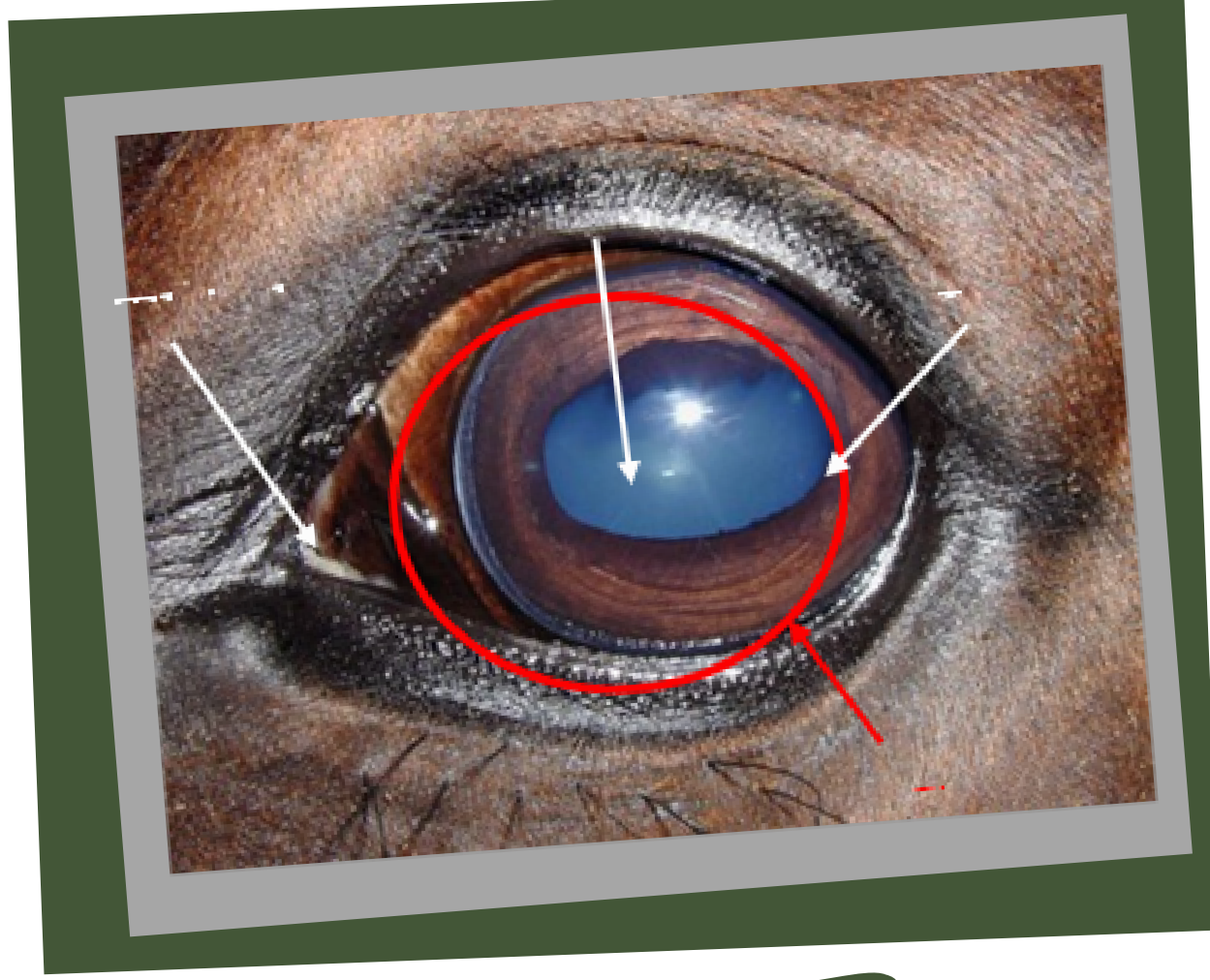




Injuries to the eye and its surrounding structures are a common problem seen by our veterinarians. Because we see these injuries so frequently, we would like to take this opportunity to provide some important information about eye injuries.

The first and most important thing is that we consider eye injuries an emergency. These types of injuries can get complicated quickly, so we always prefer to see the horse as soon as the injury is noted. That way we can start the appropriate treatment promptly.



What To Look For

Some signs that your horse has an eye injury include:

- Squinting
- Being head shy on that side
- Tearing
- Cloudy cornea
- Light sensitivity
- Inflammation of the conjunctiva
- Holding the eye closed

The Eye Exam

To facilitate the examination of the eye it is common for us to sedate the horse. Eye injuries are quite painful and the horse may not be willing to stand still for a thorough examination. Nerve blocks might also be placed to counteract the horse's tendency to tightly shut a sore eye.

We will then use an ophthalmoscope, which helps us see into the different compartments of the eye. You will often see us spray a neon yellow/green liquid into the eye. This is called fluorescein. When placed into an eye, fluorescein dye will bind to any defects in the surface of the eye making them easier to identify.

Occasionally we will take samples from the eye if we are uncertain of the specific disease process or would like some more information to formulate a treatment plan. Cells can be scraped off the surface of the eye and examined under a microscope, or a swab of the surface of the eye can be taken to identify any bacteria or fungi that might be causing an infection.

Once the eye has been thoroughly examined, a treatment plan can be formulated.



Treatment

Treatment will obviously depend on what is wrong with the eye, but there are several common types of medications we will use:

- Antibiotics/Antifungals are often a vital part of treatment if the surface of the eye has been damaged. These will help prevent infection of the deeper structures of the eye.
- Anti-inflammatories can be administered either directly into the eye or by mouth. As mentioned before, many eye diseases are very painful, so most treatment plans will include some sort of anti-inflammatory.
- A mydriatic agent will cause dilation of the pupil. With certain conditions dilation of the pupil can decrease the risk of adhesions between the iris and cornea. In other conditions a mydriatic agent can even help alleviate pain.
- Medications that affect the internal pressure of the eye can be important in some diseases where an increase in intraocular pressure can result in blindness.

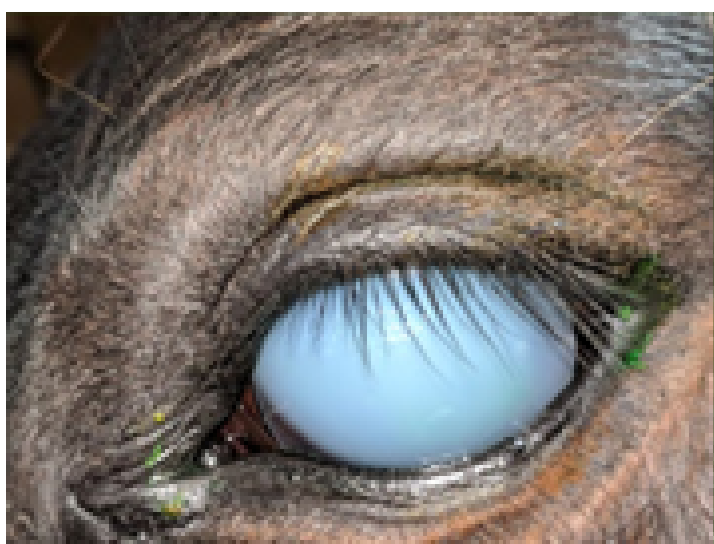
Hopefully this quick list highlights that not all eye drops are equal, and it is important to consult your veterinarian before administering some medication that was found in an old first aid kit.

Common Conditions



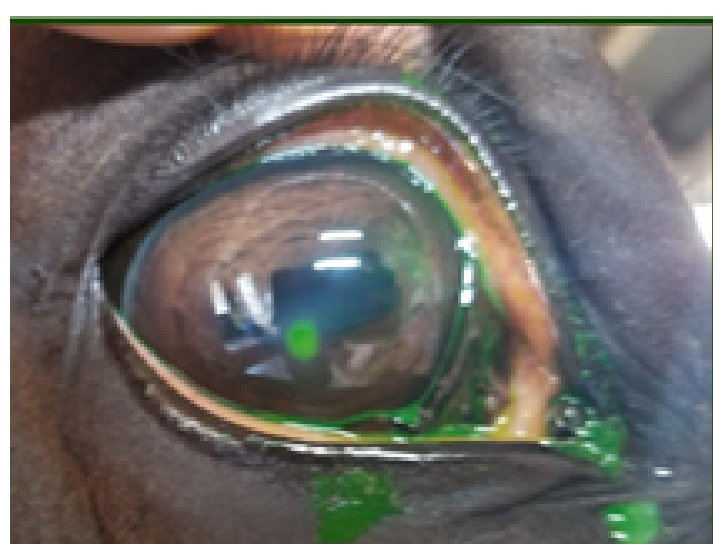
This horse has widespread mild corneal edema (cloudiness).

You can also see how constricted the pupil is.

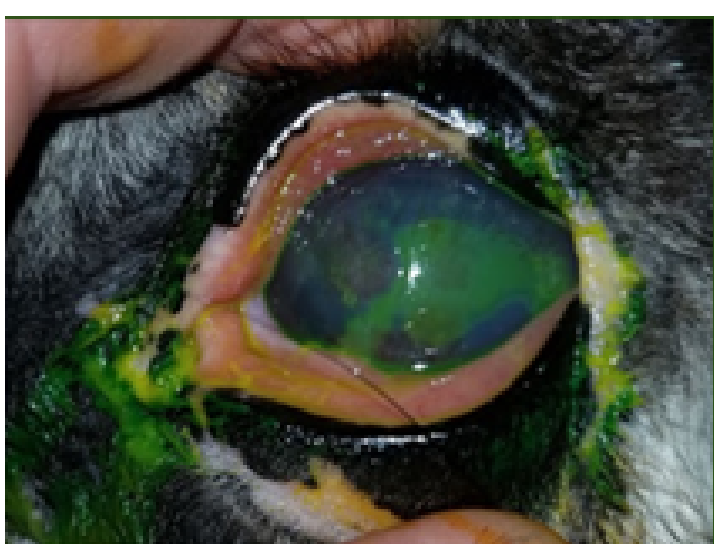


This horse has severe, widespread corneal edema (cloudiness).

See how none of the underlying structures can be visualized.

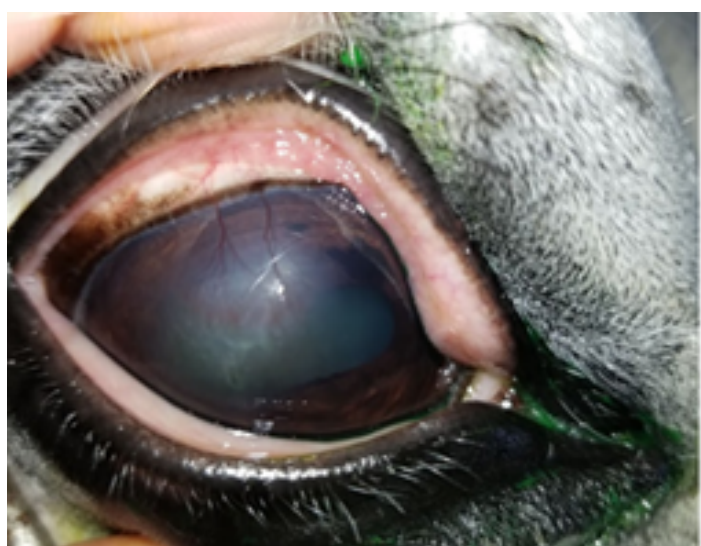


This horse has a small corneal ulcer which is highlighted by fluorescein dye



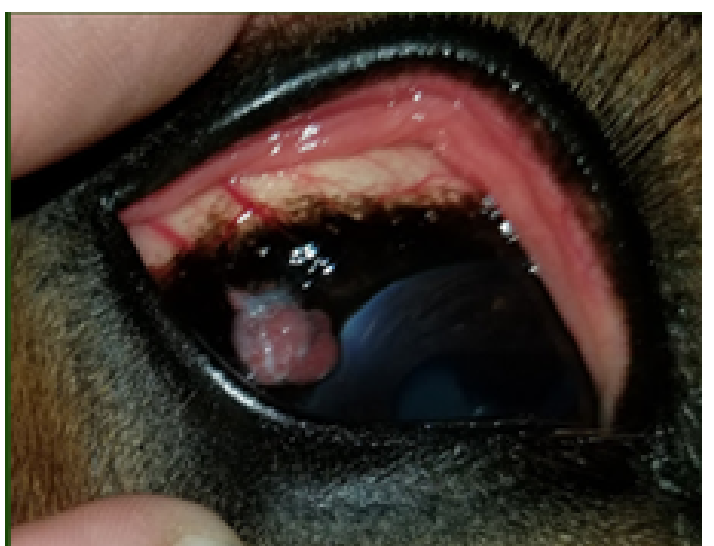
This horse has a much larger corneal ulcer.

Notice the edema in the eye surrounding the ulcer.



This horse is most of the way through healing a large corneal ulcer.

Notice the blood vessels on the surface of the eye.



This horse has a small mass on the surface of the eye that was surgically removed.

The eye remains visual.

Remember that eye injuries are emergencies.

Call the office any time you notice a squinty eye, so we can start treatment immediately.



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