



**LAKE SHORE**  
VETERINARY SPECIALISTS  
&  
EMERGENCY HOSPITAL

PORT WASHINGTON 262.268.7800 • RACINE 262.554.5344

[www.LakeshoreAnimalHospital.com](http://www.LakeshoreAnimalHospital.com)

## CORNEAL FOREIGN BODY

**What is it?** A piece of material, most often a piece of stick or other plant material that becomes stuck in the clear part of the eye (the cornea).

**Who gets it?** Most commonly hunting dogs or dogs that are out running in the woods or through high grasses.

**What are the clinical signs?** Pain – typically characterized by excessive blinking, holding eye closed, head shyness, excessive tearing, discharge from the eye (can be green or yellow – rarely clear), redness of the conjunctiva, and pawing at the eye.

**How is it diagnosed?** Examination of eye with a magnification device called an ophthalmoscope as well as fluorescein stain of the eye.

**How is it treated?** By removing of the foreign object and treatment of the wound that remains (just as you would a corneal scratch or ulcer). In some cases this can be done simply by numbing the surface of the cornea with special eye drops. In other cases, heavy sedation or general anesthesia could be required. The most difficult corneal foreign objects to remove can require referral to a veterinarian specialized in Ophthalmology. These veterinarians have unique equipment including operating microscopes and specialized instruments that can make removal of foreign objects with minimal additional injury to the cornea possible.

**What is the aftercare?** Recheck with a veterinarian in 24-36 hours is very important. At this recheck, the eye will typically be re-stained with fluorescein stain. Any changes in the eye that indicate the condition is worsening will need to be addressed immediately. Otherwise, problems can rapidly progress to a state where the eye or vision is threatened. If things are healing well, generally 3-4 days of treatment is enough for small corneal wounds to heal. Obviously, larger injuries may require other follow up or longer term care.

**What is the prognosis?** Small foreign objects that are easily removed with minimal damage to the cornea have an excellent prognosis for complete healing with no changes in vision. Deeper or penetrating foreign objects can result in blindness or loss of the eye. The biggest concern for long term prognosis of these injuries is complete removal of the foreign material. If any material is inadvertently left behind, recurrent infections can occur. In addition, there is a greater risk of scarring of the cornea which could compromise vision to some degree.