

# What causes Tear Staining

## *Excessive Tearing & Blocked Tear Ducts*

Excessive tearing can be caused by blockage in the tear ducts. When the tears produced are not able to drain properly this causes the tears to overflow onto the muzzle. It is important to keep the muzzle area around the eyes dry because this moisture can cause the eye area to get infected. Moisture creates a perfect breeding ground for bacteria and/or yeast. Yeast infections can cause a deep reddish-brown stain. Bacteria infections can also cause excessive tearing and staining.

To determine if your dog has blocked tear ducts you will need to set an appointment with your veterinarian ophthalmologist. They can evaluate your dog and see if it would be necessary to flush open the tear ducts.

## *Environmental Factors*

**Fleas & ticks** are not only undesirable to have in your home but they are also very problematic for your dog. These parasites carry mites that will embed themselves in your dog.

Certain foods contain **dyes, additives and preservatives** that many breeders believe perpetuate the tearing and staining problems. Try to find a food that is holistic and does not have ingredients that can cause allergies.

Distilled **water** contains no minerals and is ideal for trying to prevent tear staining. Some areas have very high mineral counts in the water. Minerals like iron can also stain the facial hair on your dog. Always keep your dog's muzzle clean and dry.

**Smoking** around your dog is not only unhealthy for him but the smoke will irritate the eyes and will cause excessive tearing and staining.

**Hair or debris** in the eyes will cause irritations and/or infections. Eye irritation will cause the eyes to produce more tears as a lubricant. In cases where an infection develops the tearing will increase as well as the staining.

## *Ear Related Tearing Problems*

When a dog has an ear infection this will cause the excessive tearing accompanied by red stains. Ear infections can be caused by several factors:

**Improper drying** after bathing will cause water to buildup inside of the ear canal causing a yeast and/or bacterial infection. Always make sure to dry your dog's ears with some type of drying agent. Talk to your veterinarian about what they would recommend.

**Ear mites** are tiny infectious organisms that look like tiny ticks. To the naked eye the mite looks like a small white dot. Infection usually produces a characteristic dry black ear discharge commonly said to resemble coffee grounds. This type of infestation will also cause excessive tearing and staining.

**Excessive hair** in the ears can cause both water retention and wax buildup. Both of which are ideal reproducing grounds for yeast and/or bacteria. Make sure to keep the ears free of excess hair. You can remove the hair by gently pulling them out with your fingers. Consult your vet if you require help removing the ear hairs.

## *Cutting Adult Teeth*

When puppies lose their baby teeth, commonly referred to as "cutting teeth" – they experience a change in their development that physically affects their tear ducts. When puppies are cutting teeth their gums will be swollen and inflamed and sometimes sore to the touch. This inflammation sometimes puts pressure on the sinus cavity causing the tear ducts to be agitated. Your puppy will require a lot of chew toys during this development period.

## *Genetics*

Many breeders believe that tear staining can be genetic. There have been breeders that have reported that adults with little or no tear staining produced puppies with little or no tear staining and vice versa. Many breeders from all different breeds agree that **there appear to be a genetic predisposition to tear staining.**

## **How to reduce or eliminate tear staining?**

When trying to whiten your dog's face keep in mind that without discovering the source(s) you will continue to struggle with this problem. That being said there are many different things you can do to help reduce and/or eliminate tear staining. Here are a few suggestions:

### **Topical Daily Care:**

1<sup>st</sup> Clean the stained areas with [Pure Paws Ultra No Rinse Shampoo](#) mixed with 50% distilled water. Work this into the coat with your fingers avoiding the eyes, nose and mouth. Once the stained area is saturated take a cotton swab, soak it with **3% hydrogen peroxide, WHITE AREAS ONLY!**, and squeeze the hydrogen peroxide over the bridge of the nose taking care not to get into the eyes, nose or mouth. Towel off the excess and blow dry the coat. (Be careful not to get these items in the eyes; if you do, flush eyes with cool water.)

2<sup>nd</sup> Once the coat is dry. Take a makeup brush and apply Whitening Powder or Corn Starch to the stained areas. These powders will help keep moisture out of the coat.

3<sup>rd</sup> Make sure to clean the face once a day and make sure the eye area is free of moisture. Always give extra attention to this area when conditioning your dog.

### **Oral Care (Consult your Veterinarian):**

Many breeders have found success using **Tetracycline**. This is commonly used for 10 days and may need to be repeated. This is not a product that should be used in puppies. The product will cause puppies' adult teeth to stain yellow. An alternative to the Tetracycline is **Tylan Powder**. Please consult your vet before placing your dog on any type of antibiotic.

**Best Ingredients = Best Results**