



INHERITED EYE PROBLEMS

The two most common, serious eye defects that Cavaliers can be afflicted with are **CATARACTS** and **RETINAL DYSPLASIA**.

ACATARACT may be defined as a loss of the normal transparency of the lens of the eye. In most cases these start out as small spots of opacity on the lens which slowly grow larger. Once they cover most of the lens the dog begins having difficulty seeing--eventually leading to blindness. Cataracts can be operated on when they are **ripe**. This is a fairly expensive operation but quite successful. There is also an inherited form of cataracts in Cavaliers that are present from birth. These cataracts do not progress and do not lead to blindness. In many cases, very mild forms can be CERF'd (CERF will be explained later) after a few years of ophthalmologist exams showing the cataracts are not progressing/growing.

RETINAL DYSPLASIA comes in 3 different forms: **retinal folds**, **geographic dysplasia** and **retinal detachment**.

Retinal Folds - These are malformations of the retina of the eye. When an ophthalmologist looks at them they look like tiny squiggles on the retina. Often puppies have folds but they disappear or cover over as they age and they are no longer apparent after one year or so of age. Cavaliers with retinal folds can be CERF'd. It is a breeder option as to whether or not to breed Cavaliers affected with retinal folds.

Geographic Dysplasia - This is a malformation of the retina similar to folds except it is a larger, irregularly shaped area of development. This is a more severe form of retinal dysplasia. It is suggested that Affected animals NOT be bred.

Retinal Detachment - This is the most severe form and can lead to blindness in some breeds. Affected animals should NOT be bred.