

Guinea Pig Eye Health

Guinea pigs normally have clear eyes that are of equal size and shape to each other. While most guinea pigs have dark brown or black eyes, some lighter colored pigs have eyes that are blue or red. The eyelids are smooth and glide over the entire surface of the eye when they blink.



Abnormal Guinea Pig Eye Conditions

Infections affecting the eye or other areas of the body, such as upper respiratory or skin infections, can result in conjunctivitis or “pink eye.” You may see:



Skin infection affecting eye health

- Redness or “bloodshot” appearance
- Swollen eyelids
- Thick discharge or crusty appearance around the eyes and nose

Trauma can damage the eye or lead to an infection. Trauma can be caused by scratching, fighting, or material getting stuck inside the eyelid or injuring the eye. You may see:



Cloudiness from infection or trauma

- Squinting in pain
- Watery eyes
- Small white dot on the eye surface
- General bluish-white cloudiness

Birth Defects can result in an abnormal shape or position of the eye or surrounding parts. Examples include:



Squinting or abnormally small eye with mild discharge

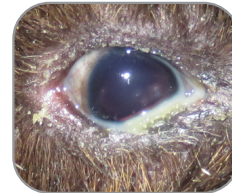
- One or both eyes smaller than normal or missing
- Eyelid rolling inward
- Misplaced eyelashes or other hairs that rub against the eye

You may see:

- White or blue cloudiness

- Redness
- Excessive tears or mucus
- Squinting or rubbing the eye

Exophthalmos is a condition that causes the eye to bulge outward. It can cause the eye surface to dry out because the eyelid can't cover the whole eye. Exophthalmos may be caused by:

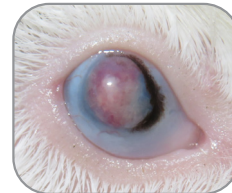


Mucous discharge from infection, birth defect, or trauma

- Infection, like a tooth root abscess
- Swelling from trauma
- Glaucoma
- Cancer

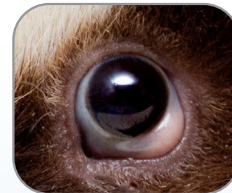
You may see:

- Thick discharge
- Blood vessels and/or fleshy tissue on the eye surface



Blood vessels on eye surface

Metabolic changes occur with age or growth and may signal disease elsewhere in the body. While these conditions can accompany disease, the following eye conditions don't typically require immediate veterinary treatment:



“Pea” eye

- **Cataract:** The lens (center of eye) becomes opaque gray/white/blue and shiny. This is common with diabetes.
- **“Fatty” or “pea” eye:** Fat deposits accumulate under the eye (usually no treatment needed).

PRACTICAL TIP



Good management and husbandry can prevent many illnesses and injuries in your guinea pigs:

- Avoid overcrowding
- Sanitize pens and equipment regularly
- Ventilate buildings to ensure good air quality

DID YOU KNOW?

Many eye conditions, whether they begin in the eye or elsewhere in the body, can be passed from animal to animal. It's important to separate sick guinea pigs from healthy ones, even if they are still “acting” normal.

Talk with your veterinarian if you notice any of these signs or symptoms of eye disease in your guinea pigs.

