

# Eye Problems in Rabbits: An Overview

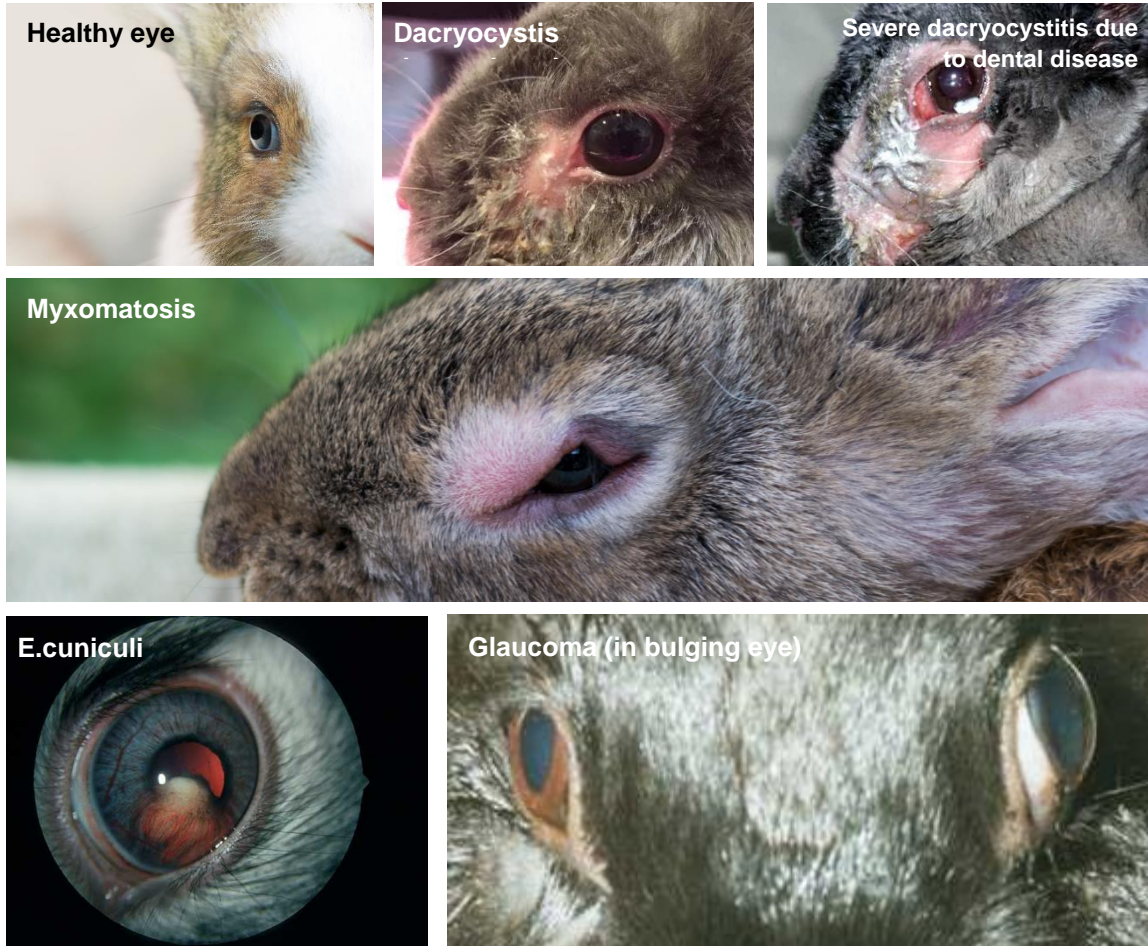
## Overview

- There are many different problems that could affect your rabbit's eyes.
- If you notice a problem with, contact your vet for advice straight away. **If your rabbit seems to be in pain, book an urgent appointment.**
- Left untreated, eye problems can be serious and cause blindness.

## Conditions

There are several different conditions can cause problems with a rabbit's eye(s) including:

- [Eye infections/conjunctivitis](#)
- [Dental disease](#) (because rabbit teeth sit very close to their eyes)
- [Dacryocystitis \(inflammation of the tear ducts\)](#)
- **Eye/corneal ulcers** - a corneal ulcer is a wound on the surface of the eye. Ulcers need treatment to help them heal and left untreated, can sometimes cause the eyeball to burst.
- **Glaucoma** – increased pressure inside the eye. Glaucoma is a painful condition that can quickly lead to blindness if left untreated.
- **Infectious disease** such as:
  - [Myxomatosis](#) - a devastating virus that causes swelling of the head, eyes, face, and quickly leads to death. Myxomatosis spreads from wild rabbits to pet rabbits through fleas and mosquitoes and is prevented by vaccination.
  - [Pasteurella infection](#) - a common bacterial disease in rabbits that causes eye disease, breathing problems and abscesses.
  - ***E. cuniculi*** - a tiny parasite that affects rabbits by causing damage to the brain, nervous system, kidneys and sometimes the eyes.
- **Uveitis** – inflammation inside the eyeball.
- **Masses and tumours** – behind, in, and around the eye.



*Images courtesy of Sheila Crispin*

## Symptoms of eye problems in rabbits

If your rabbit has a problem with either his/her eye(s), you may notice the following symptoms:

- [Weeping/discharge](#)
- [Redness or swelling](#)
- Cloudiness
- Pain/blinking/keeping one or both eye(s) closed
- Third eyelid showing
- A lump in or around the eye
- Loss of vision/blindness
- Flickering eye movements
- Blood in the eye

- Bulging eye

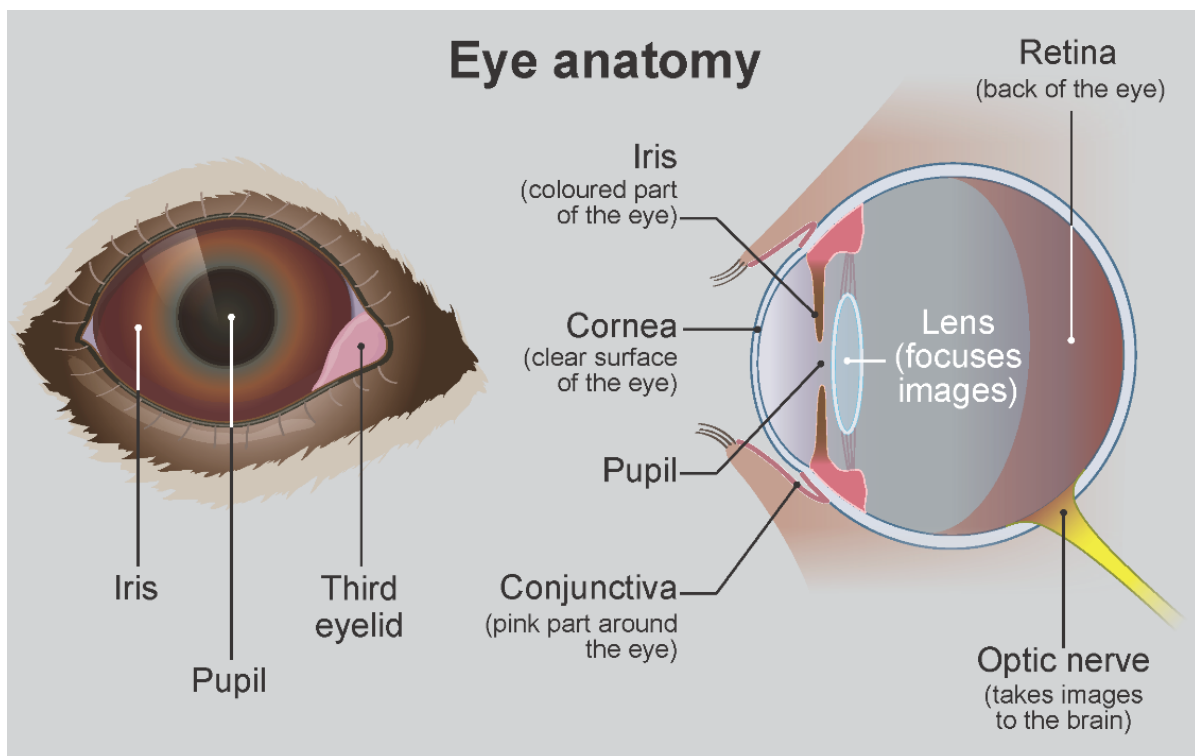
### When to contact your vet

To prevent any permanent damage or loss of vision, all eye problems should be taken seriously. Contact your vet as soon as you notice a problem with your rabbit's eyes. Leaving your rabbit without treatment could lead to much more serious problems developing.

**Find out whether you are eligible for free or low cost PDSA veterinary treatment using our checker below or visit [www.pdsa.org.uk/eligibility](http://www.pdsa.org.uk/eligibility)**

### Eye anatomy

See our image below explaining eyeball anatomy.



- **Eyelids** - rabbits have three eyelids; the upper lid, lower lid and a third eyelid in the inside corner of the eye.
- **Conjunctiva** - the soft, pink tissues inside the eyelids and around the eyeball.
- **Cornea** – the clear surface of the eyeball.

- **Iris** - the circular coloured part of the eye.
- **Pupil** - the hole in the iris that lets light into the eye.
- **Lens** - the lens is a small, transparent disc inside the eyeball. It puts images into focus as they travel to the back of the eye.
- **Retina** - the back of the eye where a layer of light-sensitive cells receive images.
- **Optic nerve** - the nerve that transmits image signals to the brain, enabling sight.

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