

## Eye Removal (enucleation) in Cats

### Overview

- Removing an eye (enucleation) is usually a last resort, but is necessary in some circumstances.
- Your vet may advise removing an eye if it's been badly damaged, is causing unmanageable pain, is affected by an untreatable condition, or contains a tumour.
- This article contains information about eye removal surgery, recovery, and information on owning a partially sighted / blind cat.

### When is eye removal necessary?

It might be a shock to hear that your cat needs an eye removing, but it's the kindest option if it's been badly damaged, is causing unmanageable pain, is affected by an untreatable condition, or contains a tumour. Severe eye ulcers, severe eye injuries, tumours, uveitis and glaucoma are all conditions that can lead to enucleation.



*A cat after removal of its right eye.*

## Eye removal surgery - what to expect

If your cat needs an eye removed, they will have it done under general anaesthetic and will be given strong pain relief and local anaesthetic. They will have the fur around their eye clipped, their eyeball and eyelids carefully removed and their wound stitched up. Once the surgery is complete, skin will cover the empty eye socket and once the fur grows back you will hardly see the scar (see image above).

## Recovery and aftercare

**Bruising.** Your cat may come home with some bruising and swelling, which is likely to get worse in the first 24 hours.

**Weeping.** It's normal to see a small amount of blood-stained fluid weeping from your cat's wound, contact your vet if there is more than a few drips.

**Pain.** After their surgery, your cat is likely to be in a small amount of discomfort, but most of their pain will be controlled with medication. Once your cat has returned home, make sure to give them all their medicines at the correct time and contact your vet if they seem painful.

**Protect the wound.** You will need to stop your cat damaging their wound, especially in the first 3-5 days after surgery. Your cat will be given a head cone (Elizabethan collar), which they must wear at all times, until your vet advises removal. You will need to stop other pets licking your cat's wound by keeping them separate if necessary.

**Indoors.** Until your cat has recovered, you will need to keep them indoors and provide a litter tray.

**Medication.** Your vet will send your cat home with medication for you to give; you may find our medication planner useful.

**Rest and TLC.** Your cat will need a comfortable, warm, quiet place to rest during their recovery.

**Food.** Soft food can help if your cat is painful when they eat. If your cat is off their food, try warming it slightly or giving them something strong smelling, such as tuna.

## Owning a one-eyed cat / blind cat

**One-eyed cats.** Owning a one-eyed cat isn't particularly different to owning a fully sighted cat, they tend to adapt very well. Below are some tips to help them:

- Talk to them when you approach them on their blind side to avoid startling them. Mention this to visitors and take extra care with other animals and small children.
- Move any head height objects that could damage your cat.

**Blind cat.** Caring for a blind pet is a big responsibility, but is possible if they adapt. Read our full article on caring for a blind pet.

## Cost

An enucleation operation can be very expensive, especially if there are any complications. It's important to speak to your vet openly about your finances, the cost of treatment, as well as what you think is right for your cat. Consider insuring your cat as soon as you get them, before any signs of illness start. This will ensure you have all the support you need to care for them.

**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)**

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