

Pigmentary Uveitis (Golden Retriever Uveitis)

courtesy of Animal Info Publications

Incidence

Low. At this time, pigmentary uveitis seems to be a problem confined to some lines of Golden Retrievers in the United States. However the National Golden Retriever Club of Australia is taking the condition seriously and is monitoring closely the situation with Australian Golden Retrievers.



What is pigmentary uveitis?

Uveitis is an inflammation of the front part of the eye (the iris and the external part of the eye involving blood vessels and muscles) which is a progressive disease (eg. worsens with age). It can be caused by infection but does appear to be a hereditary disease. CERF describes it as a disease where the method of inheritance is not yet defined, but recommends strongly that affected dogs are not bred. Because it is a relatively new disease, little is known about its causes at this stage. However the Golden Retriever Club of America is encouraging Golden Retriever breeders and owners to participate in a study to help define what the hereditary link is. Further information can be found at

www.grca.org/health/uveitis

What are the signs or symptoms?

The average age of onset is about 8 years and the condition usually affects both eyes. It causes pigmentation of part of the lens capsule of the eye and about 50% of affected dogs will progress to glaucoma and cataracts. Prognosis is guarded for dogs with progressive uveitis - again close to 50% will lose their sight. It is a painful condition and affected dogs may show this by rubbing their eyes with their paws and the eyes may appear reddened and inflamed.

How is it diagnosed?

Your dog will need a variety of eye examinations performed with special equipment by a veterinary ophthalmologist. Your veterinarian will be able to detect initial clinical signs by an eye examination and will be able to refer you and your dog to a specialist if required.

How can I avoid buying a Golden Retriever with pigmentary uveitis?

Enquire about the disease in your breeders dogs. Do not buy a Golden Retriever if the parents do not have regular eye clearance examinations.