

The Zim Family Cocker Spaniel Forum Posts on Cherry Eye

I think anybody that buys a Cocker puppy... given all the health problems that the breed has... is taking a risk. There's always a chance that a puppy you buy will end up with a cherry eye, an umbilical hernia, a heart condition, cataracts, a hip problem, or any of the other things that sometimes happen with Cockers. It goes with the territory. If you can't accept that risk, buy a goldfish.

Jim Zim

This is a compilation of posts that have been submitted to questions on the Zim Family Cocker Spaniel Forum regarding Cherry Eye. When I researched this on Sunday, March 9, 2008 there were 53 pages of 786 matches for Cherry Eye. What I have done is selected those posts that had helpful information contained in them that would enable a forum member or guest the ability to make an educated decision regarding treatment for one of god's creatures for Cherry Eye. I have copied the posts in there entirety and also included the authors user name and link so that you may reference the post and the question it was answering. I do not make any claims as to which method is best as it depends on the circumstances that you are faced with. I do have personal experience with cherry eye and if it were not for this forum and the information that I was equipped with mine may not have had a positive outcome. Pricing is also another issue. For me as with many on this forum we would pay whatever the cost to cure our babies, but for some this may not be possible. With that in mind, while researching this I discovered that the cost is anywhere from \$160.00 to \$1,800.00 per eye at this time. Rather than focus on the cost of the operation, I would focus on the amount of experience the Veterinary has with Cherry Eye and what their rate of success is for the procedure. Sometimes the most spent had the worst outcome from what I discovered. There are other concerns or issues too. Healing time and care after the surgery. Depending on the procedure or route taken, it can be days to weeks before the eye returns to normal. There may also be ongoing care or treatment depending on procedure you elect to have done. This can range from drops during the healing process to drops to for the rest of your babies life. There are some additional web sites at the end of the posts for continued research. Good luck with the knowledge that you derive from these members that were willing to post their information on line for the benefit of others.

Mike

As you will see by the following explanation, there are a number of breeds pre-disposed to cherry eye. If it pops in and out, it is still considered a cherry eye. I hope this helps.

As there are no perfect humans, there are no perfect dogs. Each breed is subject to their own predisposed faults - some minor and some major. For instance most puppies of the short nosed breeds are prone to cherry eyes. If this should occur to your puppy there is no need to panic and rush to the emergency clinic during the night. The red (cherry like) gland showing in the corner of the eye is not the eye falling out. Puppies acquire these during stressful periods such as when teething. Through careful observation, frequently, you can catch them before they require surgery.

Normally the gland of the third eyelid (nictitans gland) is located behind the third eyelid in the inner corner of the eye. This gland is attached to the fascial covering of the eye and eye socket by a fibrous band of tissue. Structural weakness of this attachment can lead to prolapse of the gland. The result is "cherry eye," so called because the prolapsed gland is exposed on the surface of the eye and becomes red, inflamed and swollen.

Some breeds of dogs are predisposed to have prolapse of the nictitans gland. These include cocker spaniels, bulldogs, beagles, bloodhounds, Lhasa apsos, and Shih tzus. Typically, affected dogs are between six months to two years of age when this occurs.

The gland is an important lacrimal, or tear-producing gland, and so it should not be removed. In the past cherry eye was treated with surgical excision of the gland; subsequently veterinarians found that this frequently resulted in keratoconjunctivitis sicca, or "dry eye." Currently, recommended treatment involves surgically returning the gland to its proper position. Topical medications may help diminish inflammation and swelling, provide moisture, and fight associated infection before surgery, but are not recommended for long-term treatment.

Surgical repositioning of the gland is commonly performed for cherry eye. Typically dogs do well after this surgery, but in five to 20 percent of these cases the gland can re-prolapse. Additionally, it is common for cherry eye to occur in the opposite eye as well.

<http://www.zimfamilycockers.com/Forums/viewtopic.php?f=2&t=18793&st=0&sk=t&sd=a&hilit=cherry+eye&start=15>

DonnaJ

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Cockers have looser eyelids than a lot of other breeds, so that's why Cockers tend to get cherry eyes more often than most other breeds.

If the eyelids are really loose, nothing short of surgery will permanently fix a cherry eye. BUT... if the eyelids are only somewhat loose, you may very well be able to massage the gland back in place under the eyelid where it belongs... and it may very well stay there. I've personally done this to several dogs.

I have a crude analogy that I always use to explain cherry eyes. If you are easily offended, you can just stop reading right now!

When a dog gets a cherry eye, it's very analogous to a woman having a breast pop out of her bra. It's just flesh popping out from behind something that normally holds it in. Scheduling surgery should not be the first response! The first thing to do is to tuck 'er back in where she belongs... and see if she stays!

When a dog is being rowdy... especially if the dog is wrestling with another dog... there are lots of things that can happen to pop the cherry eye out from behind the eyelid. Again, to use the bra analogy, if a woman were wrestling in her underwear, it really wouldn't surprise anyone if there were a "wardrobe malfunction". So, a cherry eye that happens during rowdy play really isn't a huge cause for concern. Just try to tuck it back under where it belongs.

A cherry eye that occurs when the dog is just sitting around doing nothing... that's another matter. The dog would have to have a really loose eyelid for the flesh to pop out when the dog was just

sitting around calmly. If that's the case, the cherry eye is not likely to stay tucked in place even if you do manage to push it back where it belongs. So, in the case of a cherry eye that happens when the dog is at rest... it seems more likely to me that such a cherry eye would require surgery. But do always try the simple fix first!

<http://www.zimfamilycocker.com/Forums/viewtopic.php?f=2&t=18793&st=0&sk=t&sd=a&hilit=cherry+eye&start=15>

Jim Zim

I am not an expert on cherry eye I can only recall information about specific cases I have dealt with concerning my dogs and try to pass along all of the information I have collected.

I have had two dogs with cherry eye. One of which went in for surgery as a pup supposedly to have the gland tacked back in place and came out with the glands removed. (Long story for another time) The other dog had cherry eye for a matter of a few hours in only one eye that seems to have reversed it's self at least for now.

Cherry Eye is when the tear duct gland of the dog's third eye protrudes from the corner of the eye closest to the nose due to inflammation and irritation.

I have been told several theories on the reason for this I will share them with you now.

- The tissue normally holding this gland in place beneath the third eye lid is weak and if the eye is bumped or brushed or rubbed the thin tissue may give way allowing the gland to protrude.
- The gland while sitting under the third eye lid is still quite close to the surface of the eye and susceptible to irritations. Thus as the gland becomes irritated it swells, damaging some of the adhering tissue allowing part of the gland to protrude.
- The tissue holding this gland in place through genetics, and breeding has become weak.

Commonly asked questions and answers I received:

Why is the gland red, and bulging?

The reason the gland (bulge) turns red is because it is exposed to the air and other irritants such as dust this causes it to swell, and itch.

Is discharge common with cherry eye?

Discharge is common with cherry eye as the eye is trying to correct the irritation by producing more tears and such. Discharge may also appear if the animal has rubbed or scratched the gland.

How is cherry eye treated?

There are a few common treatments for cherry eye some done if surgical methods are not going to be used and others along with surgery.

Non-surgical - Some vets believe in massaging the gland back into place and flushing of the eye to prevent irritation of the gland. They may also recommend eye drop to be used for the remainder of the animal's life.

Surgical - There are two surgical procedures for correction of cherry eye. Normally prior to surgery you will be prescribed a topical antibiotic normally a suave and an anti-inflammatory drop thus to prevent or cure an infection and help reduce swelling.

The first and long time cure was to simply remove the gland. While this is effective Vets argue it may later on cause dry eye while some insist the 2 other tear glands produce ample lubrication.

The second and thought to be the best course of action is to have the gland surgically tacked back into its proper location by creating a small pocket out of tissue and tacking the gland in this pocket.

I hope this helps. Thank you

<http://www.zimfamilycockers.com/Forums/>

[viewtopic.php?f=8&t=24201&p=312187&hilit=Cherry+Eye#p312187](http://www.zimfamilycockers.com/Forums/viewtopic.php?f=8&t=24201&p=312187&hilit=Cherry+Eye#p312187)

riggamerall

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Oooh! I was waiting to read a Cherry Eye post! This is another topic that we educate heavily on in local rescue. The scientific jury is still out as to whether genetics plays a part in it. *I* (unscientifically!) think it does - otherwise why would it be inherent in one breed and not another?!?

Here is my personal experience/information on Cherry Eye ... (taken from my message board post at the San Diego Spaniel Social forum - cockerspaniel.meetup.com/4)

Cherry eye is quite common in the American Cockers. It is a weakened third eyelid - think of it as a herniated muscle, which shows as a small swelling/bump at the inside corner of the eyelid(s). It can range in color from a dull brown to a bright cherry red, hence the nickname "cherry eye".

There is ONLY ONE vet in San Diego that I trust so far with CE surgery. He does the correct surgery. And he is THE MOST reasonably priced in town. Our last cherry eye surgery cost under \$200.00.

There are three available surgeries to correct this. ONLY ONE is the right one, in my opinion.

Option One (least effective, most commonly done by vets): "tuck and tack". The vet tucks the cherry back into place, out of sight, and tacks it down. Most of the time the dog will have it pop out again in it's lifetime. In my view that is a waste of time, waste of money, and waste of putting your dog under anesthesia.

Option Two (the ONLY RIGHT ONE in my book): Partial Removal. The vet removes ONLY the offending portion of the cherry eye (with laser, increasing healing time down to nothing!) and leaves the tear duct glands intact, allowing your dog normal tear production through it's lifetime.

Option Three (the most radical and only to be done if absolutely necessary - we've never had to do this for our rescue dogs, by the way): Full Removal. The vet removes not only the cherry eye but the dog also loses use of the tear duct glands - resulting in the animal needing artificial tear drops inserted in the eye twice a day for the rest of it's life - or else painful eye infections will ensue.

Cherry eye surgery is often seen to be cosmetic in nature, although if left unattended it can cause irritation and scratching of the cornea and potential eye infections.

There are strong believers that CE is hereditary and those that believe that genetics have nothing to do with it. I am undecided, tho I would strongly recommend closing down a line with CE until the truth can be determined, to be on the safe side. This is really a personal call for you at this point.

Hope this helps!

<http://www.zimfamilycockers.com/Forums/>

[viewtopic.php?f=2&t=22300&p=283423&hilit=cherry+eye#p283423](http://www.zimfamilycockers.com/Forums/viewtopic.php?f=2&t=22300&p=283423&hilit=cherry+eye#p283423)

Peggy Mundell SD/Spaniel Rescue

There is another option between the first and second methods mentioned above. It involves making a "pouch" by making an incision in the surrounding tissue, tucking the prolapsed tissue into the incision, and suturing it together.

When Myshalla had a cherry eye my vet tried the first option above. It cost \$130 for one eye. Unfortunately it didn't hold. When I took her back, he did the procedure that I mentioned, at no additional cost, and it is still holding.

When I asked him why he didn't do the pouch procedure first, he said that he usually tries to "tuck and tack" first since it is less traumatic and he has about a 70% success rate. He did admit that he has a 100% success rate with the pouch. He also said that he doesn't like to do any removal, either partial or full, unless there is no other alternative.

In my opinion \$1000 seems like a lot! Maybe you should check around and see if someone else could do it for less,

There have been a LOT of posts on this topic. You may want to search the posts and find out what others have done, but the choice is completely up to you.

<http://www.zimfamilycockers.com/Forums/viewtopic.php?f=2&t=22300&p=283528&hilit=cherry+eye#p283528>

Dean

My comment to Debbie is to keep doing what you're doing. As long as you are able to get a cherry eye back to normal by yourself, and it will stay that way without popping back out in the next couple of days... you've got a minor temporary problem and there's no reason to think it will get any worse, and no reason to seek veterinary help for it.

My comment to Leanne is that she has got a great vet... a definite keeper! With a lot of vets, if you show up with a dog with cherry eye, they're going to talk you in to surgery right away. A lot of vets won't even try to massage it back in place. I think they want the surgery money, and don't try the simple fix first. Since your vet was willing to try to save you the cost of surgery by massaging it back in place, it tells me that you've got a vet that has your best interests at heart. Also, the vet was correct to advise surgery when the simple fix didn't stand up to the test of time. And finally, when you did have to have surgery, he didn't charge you an arm and a leg. That vet's a keeper!

<http://www.zimfamilycockers.com/Forums/viewtopic.php?f=2&t=24274&p=310366&hilit=cherry+eye#p310366>

Jim Zim

Update on Maggie. We just returned from our five day post surgery vet visit and all is well except she to has a bacterial ear infection in both of her ears. The Dr. said that we had caught it in the early stages since there was not any yeast associated with it. So far her eye is doing just fine. We are to continue with the eye drops for the next week and she should be getting better. She has been doing a little rubbing today which is a first since the surgery. Back to the eye questions, Maggie developed Cherry eye in her right eye at 7 month of age. I understand this to be an older age for them to develop this. I questioned the Dr. at Ames, who I understand just might be the leading ophthalmologist in the country and possible the world, if this is genetics or inherited or? and he indicated that it is an unknown and I don't recall if he stated if it was "breeders choice" or not if this develops. In other words modern medicine still doesn't know why this happens. I will

try to explain CE from memory of our conversation with the Doctor. Basically the tear gland is on the base of a "T" shaped piece of cartilage. It flips out or comes out from inside of the eyelid and the eye. Maggie's would come and go and I was hoping that it would stay in and not require the surgery. As stated on this forum there are several procedures that can be accomplished to correct the problem, even massaging back in place which I did with some success. Some success means that it did not stay in place and came back out again. This Dr. recommended the pocket and tuck procedure. It still maintains the gland, so that tears will still moisten the eye. A couple of small cuts are made, I believe in the inner eye lid and a small pocket is made to secure the gland into to keep it from popping out. In Maggie's case it had been a little over three weeks before she was able to have her surgery and during that time the cartilage had become creased. This surgeon new that if the crease was not removed it would or could cause future problems so he removed that too with a small cut. The only repercussions associated with his procedure is that sometimes the inner eye lid doesn't close all of the way. Maggie's surgery costs were more than a lot of you had paid for your surgeries, but I feel very fortunate to have had one of the leading dog ophthalmologists in the country performing her surgery. It was still less than half the price of our local vet hospital. Another consideration for Maggie's surgery was to use the local 24 emergency pet care clinic. I have heard nothing but good about these facilities and most have the latest equipment and training. Being that Ames was only 100 miles away and they have a fantastic facility, it was a no brainer for me. They had told me that when I brought her in that if she hadn't eaten from 8 or so the previous night that there was a possibility that the surgery could be performed that day and it was in my case. I was also able to bring her home that same day too. The surgery is short but drastic in the sense that she had to be paralyzed during the procedure to prevent any possibility of movement. I apologize that the surgical photo isn't very good. I wasn't prepared to take any photos let alone watch the surgery, so I only had my cell phone camera. I was afraid the flash might cause a problem so I only took the one photo before the operation began. The last dark photo of Maggie is due to flash problems with our digital camera. If I can answer any questions or be of any assistance to those that are dealing with this please do not hesitate to contact me. Sorry for the long post, I hope that this answers some of your questions.

<http://www.zimfamilycockers.com/Forums/viewtopic.php?f=8&t=20315&p=282218&hilit=cherry+eye#p282218>

Mike & Shelley & Maggie

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What has happened is that a gland (which is normally tucked under where you can't see it) has popped out. This is basically a cosmetic problem, and nothing to panic about as long as you don't just let it stay that way. If you do nothing, it could get irritated and infected.

In many cases, you can very easily fix a cherry eye yourself. This has the highest chance of working if you do it within minutes or hours of first noticing a cherry eye. All you need to do is wash your hands first, and then gently massage the bulging gland back under the lower eyelid where it belongs. In many cases, you can get the prolapsed gland back under where it belongs, and in many cases it will stay there.

If you can't pop the cherry eye back in by yourself, you'll need to have your vet do a surgical fix. This typically costs at least a couple of hundred dollars. There are several different surgical procedures that vets can do to fix cherry eyes, but I have a strong suggestion on which way you should go. Many vets will try to get you to agree to a removal of the prolapsed gland, but this is a VERY bad idea. This is the way it used to be done in the old days, and many older vets are only comfortable with this procedure because that's the way they have always dealt with cherry eyes. Others prefer this procedure because it is the easiest (and cheapest) surgical method of dealing with cherry eyes. But the reason that removal of a prolapsed gland is such a bad idea is that this

gland is responsible for production of a significant portion of the tears that lubricate the eyes. Without the gland, the dog is very likely to have dry eyes, and this CAN lead to significant problems down the road... even blindness.

A better way to go is to have your vet stitch the prolapsed gland back in place where it belongs. This is sometimes known as “the pocket technique” because the prolapsed gland is tucked back in to a pocket under the eyelid, and then a single stitch is used to anchor it down in place. Because the gland is not removed, it still produces tears... and because it is anchored with a stitch, it generally doesn’t pop back out.

So my strong advice if you can’t massage a cherry eye back in place yourself, is to locate a vet that is experienced in performing “the stitch” or “pocket technique” style of cherry eye repair. Don’t let your vet talk you in to removal of the gland, and don’t let your vet do the repair unless they have done it many times before. Getting it done correctly is important enough that you should definitely call around to locate the right vet to do the job if your regular vet isn’t up to the task.

If anyone tells you that a cherry eye should be surgically removed — even if it’s a vet that tells you — it should be an instant red flag that the person is way out of touch with the current state-of-the-art in cherry eye treatment. Don’t believe me? [Click here](http://www.acvo.com/public/cherry_eye.htm) to read what the experts at the American College of Veterinary Ophthalmologists have to say about it.

<http://zimfamilycockers.com/Forums/viewtopic.php?t=10293&highlight=cherry+eye>

Jim Zim

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I will share with you my experience and some conversations I’ve had with Dr Douglas Slatter, one of the gurus in ophthalmology (you will find most ophtho books in vets offices written by him).

First my experience. I’ve had several dogs with cherry eye. I’ve had lots of them removed, a some tacked. Most that were removed were long ago when that’s what the standard was. 99% of those dogs did just fine. The gland was removed it looked normal right away, dogs never developed dry eye.

I’ve had glands tacked, some have been successful, some have not. One had to be done three times. He ended up with dry eye. Any time after that if the first tacking did not work I have them removed.

I have a dog right now that’s 11 years old. he has one eye. The eye that has been removed went dry years ago. He had had cherry eye in the eye and the gland was removed. HOWEVER, he also has dry eye in his other eye, not as severe as the one that was removed, and that eye did NOT have cherry eye.

It is my belief that if a dog is going to get dry eye it has nothing to do with cherry eye removal. The nictitating gland produces only a PORTION of the tears for the eye. So if the lacrimal gland fails and you have no nictitating gland, you are in trouble. I believe that’s why my dogs other dry eye has been manageable.

So on to Dr Slatter. I shared my ‘wisdom’ with him (hehehe) and he totally agreed. In one of his manuals it clearly states that if you have to do multiple tackings it can cause so much scar tissue on that gland that it could potentially be worse than removing part of it (most vets that remove only take out about 1/2- 2/3rds of the gland).

I'm not sure if this helps you or not, but I thought I'd share my experiences with you.

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Julie Hyrdo

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This was recently posted on another cocker group that I belong to - you might find it interesting:

CHERRY EYE STUDY

Recently the University of North Carolina released the results of a Cherry Eye Study.

Interesting points of the study:

1. Cherry eye is not classified as a genetic problem.
2. Cherry eye is now classified as an injury.
3. Breeds prone to has this issue, Spaniels, Beagles, Blood Hounds. It does occur in other breeds but not very common.
4. Reason for the injury, Strain, dirt, pollen or other objects being trapped under the eye ligiment structure.

Eye solution treatments,

1. Eye drops with a 20% Baytril solution
2. Triple Antibiotic Ointment, "No Steriods"
3. Massage the swollen are back into place
4. If not successful Surgery, Not removing the ligiment but reattaching it to the check bone preventing loss of tear duct. and preventing future dry eye conditions.

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[viewtopic.php?f=2&t=3765&p=46071&hilit=cherry+eye#p46071](http://www.zimfamilycockers.com/Forums/viewtopic.php?f=2&t=3765&p=46071&hilit=cherry+eye#p46071)

TammyS

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Here is my advice on how to buy a good Cocker Spaniel puppy. Please keep in mind these tips are written for people looking to buy a pet, not a show dog.

- Ask if the breeder had health tests performed on the parents to be sure they are free of genetic defects. Asking this one simple question is like a litmus test: how they answer will tell you an awful lot about whether this is a "good breeder" or a "bad breeder". The best breeders will have had both parents certified by the • [Orthopedic Foundation For Animals](#) to be free of genetic hip defects and by the • [Canine Eye Registry Foundation](#) to be free of genetic eye defects. Commercial breeders, backyard breeders, and puppy mills... most of whom are just trying to make money off of their dogs... will never go to the trouble or the expense of having these tests done.
- Only buy a puppy that you can pick up directly from the breeder... don't buy from a breeder willing to ship the puppy to you. Being separated from mom for the first time is traumatic enough for a puppy... but to spend the first day away from mom in the cargo hold of a jetliner is cruel beyond belief. Imagine yourself a two year old child, taken from

your mother for the first time, placed in a cage and put in to the cargo hold — not the passenger compartment — of an airliner. Do you think they have heating and air conditioning (or even lights?) in there for the luggage? • [Read some horror stories here](#). Be extremely wary of any breeder willing to ship a young puppy to you... this would certainly tell me that the breeder was not truly concerned for the welfare of the dog. Any breeder that can't find local buyers for their puppies and has to resort to shipping puppies by air is breeding way too many puppies.

You can locate Cocker breeders near you by checking the breeder listings at • [The Open Directory Project](#) and at • [The American Spaniel Club](#) web sites. The ones listed at the American Spaniel Club site are usually very good. You'll find a lot more breeders through the Open Directory Project, but just remember that just because a breeder is listed there doesn't necessarily mean the breeder is any better than anyone else. There is almost no screening process involved for a breeder to be listed there... so ALWAYS ask questions and get to know the breeder's policies before getting committed emotionally or financially.

- Buy a puppy raised in a family environment. Visit the breeder and get a feel for whether the puppies are a business commodity or cherished and spoiled. Puppies that have grown up in a family environment are much more likely to be properly socialized than puppies who have not received much attention from humans. A dog that has not been properly socialized will be much less loving and may especially have trouble dealing with children. This is all too common in dogs bought from pet stores or high-volume breeders where the dogs are kept in cages and do not receive frequent human interaction.
- Never buy a puppy from a pet store, no matter where the pet store says the puppy came from. No reputable breeder would ever sell puppies to a pet store. Pet store puppies never come from parents who have been tested for hereditary defects such as hip and eye problems. Most pet store puppies come from puppy mills... where huge numbers of adult dogs are kept in small cages and treated as livestock. Puppy mills are the only source that can supply pet stores with the constant stream of puppies that they require. If you ever saw the conditions that puppy mill dogs are kept in, you'd be ashamed. Paying good money for a puppy at a pet store only keeps puppy mills in business. Pet store puppies are not properly socialized. For a healthy, merry Cocker Spaniel puppy that will grow up to be a great pet... a pet store is the worst place you could look!
- In the United States, ask the breeder if the puppies are registered with the American Kennel Club. In Canada, it should be the Canadian Kennel Club. It's usually a red flag if the breeder has registered the puppies with a different organization, or has not registered them at all. Puppy mills and other bad breeders who have been banned from the American Kennel Club will sometimes register their dogs with other kennel clubs in an attempt to look legitimate. Be VERY skeptical. Another red flag to look for: if they accept credit cards for purchasing puppies! This usually tells you that making money off their dogs is the main reason they are breeding puppies.
- Ask to see the pedigree of any puppy you are considering purchasing. Look at the pedigree carefully, and see if you see names that appear more than once on the pedigree... this will be a sign of inbreeding or line breeding. Beware of dogs whose pedigree shows animals that have been bred to relatives. One of the reasons that the Cocker Spaniel breed has as many health problems as it does today is because of all the inbreeding that has happened in the past. My advice is to not buy any puppy whose pedigree shows dogs that were bred to their relatives... unless it's extremely distant relatives many generations apart.

- Buy an 8-10 week old puppy. Don't buy a puppy younger than 8 weeks of age, no matter what the breeder tells you. 5-6 week old puppies may very well be eating plenty of solid food, but this alone does not mean they are ready to be on their own. There is a difference between when a puppy is physically able to leave its mom, and when it is emotionally able to. Be extremely wary of any breeder willing to sell a pup less than 8 weeks old... this is usually a good indication that the breeder is more interested in quick turnover than in the welfare of the puppy. It also is common in inexperienced breeders.

Just as important as not buying a dog that is too young... be careful about puppies that are too old. There are extremely important things going on in the pup's mental development from 2 - 4 months of age. This is when it is critical for a dog to bond with people.

Because it's difficult to tell if a dog is truly a show prospect until it has reached at least four months of age, some show breeders keep their puppies for quite a while so that they can evaluate whether they are show quality or not. The ones that aren't show quality are sold to people looking for pets. If the dog has been kept in a cage for the majority of that time (to protect his show coat) he might not have gotten properly socialized and might not make the best pet. If you go to visit the breeder and there are cages everywhere, beware. What you would rather see is dogs on the ground, at people's feet, being a part of the family.

There was a really interesting episode of the Oprah Winfrey show where Oprah had a dog expert on to discuss the problems Oprah has been having with her black Cocker Spaniel, Sophie. I remember reading about Oprah's Cocker... she got it from a very well respected show breeder. To make a long story short, the dog expert concluded that Oprah made one fatal mistake. She got the dog at six months of age and it did not get properly socialized. I know we experienced the same kind of problems with a dog we acquired from a show breeder at 6 months of age. That dog had lived the first six months of his life in a cage, and was scared of everyone and everything. He was a great looking dog with a great pedigree, but he never did bond with us and we never used him in our breeding program because of it.

- Think about whether this really is the right time for you to buy a puppy. Do you have an enclosed yard for the dog to play in? Is someone home enough of the time that the dog will receive attention every day? Are your kids old enough to treat a delicate young puppy right, even if you are not there to protect the pup? My experience has been that children under the age of 5 simply can not understand how gentle they must be with a young puppy. Kids of that age can also easily get knocked down by an exuberant 6 month old Cocker. They may even unintentionally provoke the dog, which can result in being growled at or even bitten by even the nicest and most friendly Cocker.

If you have young kids, or live in an apartment, or spend way too much time at work these days... think about waiting on your dream of owning a Cocker for a little while until the time is really right. Your life will progress and the right time will come.

Are there big changes coming in your life? Don't buy a puppy if you may be moving in the next year, if you're going to have a baby, or if you think there's a chance you might be getting divorced. Wait until your life is stable before you take on the commitment of raising a puppy. It's going to require a huge amount of your time to do it right.

- Spend as much time checking out the parents as you do the puppy. Observing the parents is your most accurate way to gauge what the puppy will be like as an adult. If the breeder won't let you meet the parents, it's a big red flag that something funny might be going on. The only exception to that rule is that it is extremely common for breeder's to use a stud belonging to someone else... so it is often impossible to meet the father.
- Beware of breeders that will not allow you to look around their kennels. Some breeders won't ever let you see where the dogs are kept. If the breeder brings a puppy out to you, but won't let you see where the rest of the dogs are... this is a red flag. They may have something to hide... such as dogs being kept in dirty or cramped conditions. Some breeders go so far as to offer to meet you in a neutral location away from their home so that you never see the conditions the dogs are kept in. Beware!
- Make sure that you realize what you are getting yourself in to: The Cocker is a long-haired breed whose coat will require a lot of care. You're going to need to brush your Cocker and give him a bath on a regular basis. You're going to need to either purchase electric clippers and give your Cocker a hair cut at least every other month, or pay someone to do this for you. If this is a problem for you, I've got two little words for you: Basset Hound!

Cockers are also prone to ear infections, due to the fact that they have a big furry ear that hangs down over the ear canal and blocks air from circulating inside. You need to be willing to do the weekly ear cleaning if necessary.

Also, are you financially prepared for all of this? The initial purchase price is just the beginning. Are you prepared for the cost of spaying or neutering your dog? What about if the dog gets a cherry eye and you have to come up with \$300 or so for surgery to repair it? Don't forget the cost of immunizations, food, flea control products, grooming services or grooming equipment, and it goes on and on!

- Don't get too worried if the puppy you are interested in seems to be "a chewer". You are only kidding yourself if you think you can find a puppy that doesn't chew things. ALL puppies chew things!

Those are my suggestions, based on my years of experience as both a buyer and a seller of Cocker puppies. I'm sure some people will disagree with a few of my suggestions! Feel free to reply with your opinions... that's what the forum is all about.

<http://www.zimfamilycockers.com/Forums/viewtopic.php?f=2&t=24255&p=309800&hilit=cherry+eye#p309800>

Jim Zim

I agree that your two options are basically the cyclosporine or artificial tears (gentiel gel is very good and popular).

We get all our drugs from Vetcentric.com (but if you go to their website it doesn't tell you prices). Our vet's website had a 'clickthrough' page to get to the part of the vetcentric website wher you

can see the prices. Here is is: [https://secure.vetcentric.com/eStore/in ... Store=true](https://secure.vetcentric.com/eStore/in...Store=true)
They have "Optimmune Opth Ointment, 3.5 g tube" for \$47.21. They also have (under a search for cyclosporine):

Cyclosporine 0.2 % Opth Soln, 10 ml \$47.03

Cyclosporine 0.5 % Opth Soln, 10 ml \$66.32

Cyclosporine 1 % Opth Soln, 10 ml \$67.25

Cyclosporine 2 % Opth Soln, 10 ml \$75.74

I hope this helps you figure out if the price you're currently paying is basically fair. Unfortunately, cyclosporine is just a very expensive drug. We had Peeve on cyclosporine capsules, and it basically cost \$6 per pill (one or two a day, depending).

Here is a list of veterinary compounding pharmacies: <http://vetmedicine.about.com/cs/pharmcomp/>
<http://www.zimfamilycookers.com/Forums/viewtopic.php?f=2&t=22577&p=288232&hilit=cherry+eye#p288232>

Madison

More Cherry Eye web site information:

<http://www.eyevet.info/cherry.html>

<http://www.peteducation.com/article.cfm?cls=2&cat=1606&articleid=409>

<http://www.gopetsamerica.com/dog-health/cherry-eye-dogs-cats.aspx>

<http://www.eyecareforanimals.com/>