



The Golden Retriever Club of America, Inc.

Important Message from the Golden Retriever Club of America

Congratulations on your new Golden Retriever! Whether you have purchased a puppy or adopted an adult, we're sure you look forward to a wonderful future with your new family member. The Golden Retriever Club of America (GRCA) shares your hopes for a long, healthy life with your new companion, and as part of our commitment to the breed, we are providing this information to help guide his or her care.

An eye disease called pigmentary uveitis (also sometimes called "Golden Retriever uveitis" or "pigmentary and cystic glaucoma") is of emerging concern in the breed, and while it is believed to have a genetic basis, at this time there are no satisfactory tools that breeders can use to be certain to avoid producing affected puppies. Therefore, even the most carefully bred Golden may be at risk for developing this disease.

Pigmentary uveitis typically develops in middle-aged or senior Goldens, although dogs are sometimes diagnosed as young adults. Early stages of the disease are usually very mild, and owners and their general veterinarians may not notice outward signs. As pigmentary uveitis progresses, symptoms such as redness and tearing may appear, and over time the disease may progress to glaucoma. This can be a serious quality of life issue because pain from glaucoma may necessitate surgery to remove the affected eye(s). However, many ophthalmologists believe that early diagnosis and treatment may control or delay progression of the disease so that many or most affected dogs can live normal lives in comfort and without visual impairment.

Because early diagnosis *prior to the appearance of outward signs* provides the best opportunity for treatment, many ophthalmologists recommend that all Goldens have annual screening eye examinations by a veterinary ophthalmologist beginning at approximately three to four years of age. GRCA suggests that you share and discuss this information with your veterinarian, and if you obtained your dog from a GRCA member, he or she will be able to help you find modest cost eye screening clinics in your area. Since most eye clinics are held around the same time each year, many owners find it convenient to attend the same clinic each year. Alternatively, you can find a list of veterinary ophthalmologists at www.acvo.com or you can also locate eye clinics at www.offa.org or at www.vmdb.org or at http://cavalierhealth.org/health_clinics.htm

Please know that while this can be a serious disease for affected dogs (and thus the reason for this letter), by far the vast majority of Goldens will never be affected by pigmentary uveitis. We don't want you to worry or be alarmed, but rather just to be aware so that you can plan to include appropriate screening as part of your dog's routine well-care. However, if your dog is ever diagnosed, there are two important steps that we request you take beyond initiating therapy as recommended by the ophthalmologist. First, please notify your dog's breeder of the diagnosis so that he/she can make informed breeding decisions. And second, please ask the ophthalmologist to report the diagnosis on a CERF or OFA form so that GRCA and researchers have accurate data to guide our efforts to reduce the incidence of pigmentary uveitis in the breed.

Once again, congratulations on your new Golden Retriever! If you would like to learn more about GRCA or pigmentary uveitis, please visit the Club website at www.grca.org and go to the Health section for the most current updates and information. We hope that you will cherish your dog and love the breed as much as we do, and we wish your dog a long, happy, healthy lifetime as a member of your family.