CERF 101

We hope that by helping people to read a CERF (Canine Eye Registration Foundation) exam form, it will alleviate any fears people may have about testing their dogs.

* The GPCA Health Committee recommends that all German Pinschers be tested yearly for eye disease.

HOW TO READ AN EYE EXAM REPORT

If you look at the exam form below, you see it is divided into areas. On the left you will find an area designated for owners to fill out. The rest is for the veterinarian to complete.

Veterinarians put their finds in the center lower half part of the form. Beneath a boxed area marked LENS. You will see two circles to the right and left of this box. The left side shows two views of the right eye from the front and from the side (the lens is shaped like an M&M). The right side shows views of the left eye. This is where the ophthalmologist will generally mark what he sees. You will also see a list of places where cataracts may occur (types):

- anterior cortex

- posterior cortex

- equatorial cortex

- anterior and posterior sutures

NOTE: Cataracts ON the sutures are different than prominent suture lines. All dogs have suture lines. Some are prominent and some are not. Those will usually be noted in the

"comments" box in the lower right hand corner of the form. Sometimes the ophthalmologists will draw them in the lens area where they will look like an inverted Y.

Punctate cataracts on the suture lines will be little dots at 12, 4, and 7 o'clock, usually. Notice on the form the three little eggs to the left of each site, and the three to the right. Above them it says Diff.(Diffuse), Inter. (Intermediate) and Punc. (Punctate). These indicate the SIZE of the cataracts.

A "generalized" cataract is when the eye looks like a "white marble". The ophthalmologist will note the size of whatever "spots" he sees. They may differ from eye to eye.

- IMPORTANT NOTE: Below the word generalized on the form, is a line that reads: **"significance of above punctate or capsular cataract unknown."**

- In German Pinschers, at present, the significance of both cataract types are unknown, so the ophthalmologist will generally fill in that box if he notes punctate or capsular cataracts. These dogs will pass CERF. It still means the dogs has cataract(s), however the significance is not known at the time of the exam*.* Usually it is recommended that the dog be rechecked in six months to a year for any possible progression.

 Punctate cataracts should never be ignored! !f you are a breeder, and place a dog diagnosed with punctates in a home, please warn the owner that the cataracts need to be monitored for progression.

Below the LENS area on the form is the VITREOUS heading. It should be noted that Persistent Hyperplastic Primary Vitreous (PHPV) is an issue in GPs. Here is a PHPV link: http://www.sport-dobermann.com/html/home.html

The categories for OTHER and NORMAL are pretty self-explanatory.

EXAMPLES

Below are actual exam forms showing diagnosed **anterior punctate cataracts**.

CATARACT   LENS   CATARACT

T   N   N   T

anterior cortex
posterior cortex
equatorial cortex
anterior sutures
posterior sutures
nucleus
capsular
generalized

significance of above punctate or capsular cataract unknown

subluxation/luxation

VITREOUS

degeneration
persistent hyaloid artery
PHPV/PTVL

A   P   A   P

NO. 2 PENCIL, BLUE, OR BLACK INK OK

CATARACT   LENS   CATARACT

T   N   N   T

anterior cortex
posterior cortex
equatorial cortex
anterior sutures
posterior sutures
nucleus
capsular
generalized

significance of above punctate or capsular cataract unknown

subluxation/luxation

VITREOUS

degeneration
persistent hyaloid artery
PHPV/PTVL

A   P   A   P

NO. 2 PENCIL, BLUE, OR BLACK INK OK

Posterior Intermediate Cataract

Above is the exam form of the same dog a year later. Note there has been NO progression

This form above shows the same dog the NEXT year. Notice, there are now cataracts in the right eye also. The examining ophthalmologist noted under comments: "left- **posterior sutures** and **focal posterior opacities**" "right- **punctate posterior cortical** opacities and **posterior capsular** opacities". This last comment is "suspicious for early genetic cataract".

Here is the same dog two years later. The dog is seven years old at this point, four years after the first "spot" appeared.

Senile Cataract

The above dog was diagnosed with the BEGINNING of **senile cataracts**, although CERF'd clear at age 9. They are not visible to the naked eye, nor is his vision impaired yet. (Note the site of onset, the **equatorial cortex**, which is typical of senile cataracts and not heritable.) The dog was over 12 at the time of exam.

If you are interested in seeing eye anatomy and photos of diffuse an intermediate cataracts, click on this site: http://www.havanese.org/heart/anatomyNew.htm.

HOW TO READ A CERF CERTIFICATE

Most of the information on a CERF Registration Certificate speaks for itself: breed, registered name of dog, AKC registration number, color of the dog and owner name and address. the current CERF number of the dog is on the right top corner.

HOW TO READ A CERF NUMBER

Example: GRP-126/2004-37

GRP is the CERF code for German Pinscher
The next **number** (126) indicates in what order dogs are given certification. This number does not change yearly.
After the / comes the **year** the dog was examined (2004).**This number changes yearly.**
The last number would indicate the age of the dog in months at the time of the CERF examination (37 mos).
A letter N added to the end of a CERF number means the dog has no permanent identification (tattoo, microchip, DNA profile).

Below the CERF number you will see the date of birth, sex, date examined and the permanent identification of the dog (CERF does not require permanent ID but will specify dogs that do not have this).

On the very top of the form is CERF's telephone number and next to it the date the registration certificate was issued.

If a Category E printed to the left of the CERF phone number,it shows that
 A dog has one of these types of cataracts: punctate, capsular, or suture line.
CERF quote: "All dogs that have a Category listed are still considered to be breedable dogs, however they have a condition indicated on the exam form other than normal, that is considered a Breeder's Option."
Breeders Option means it is up to the breeder what risks they are willing to take. It is important to know for certain that a category E cataract will not progress in order to make responsible breeding choices.

Don't be afraid to ask the examining ophthalmologist if you have any questions.

The link to online CERF verification: http://www.vmdb.org/cerf.html
To see status of dogs posted to CERF, click on the Certification Online Verification and then click on the one of the search headings. If you click on the heading "By Dog's Name," it will enable you to see ALL GPs that have been posted to CERF since 1988 (first choose German Pinscher from the breed choices then scroll down and click on SEARCH)

FAQ

My dog was diagnosed with a punctate. What is that?
Punctate is an adjective, not a noun. Cataracts are categorized by size. The smallest are called punctate cataracts. These can progress to intermediate cataracts and finally to generalized or hypermature cataracts, which are the "white marbles" that can be easily seen. The progression of cataracts can be very slow, taking a number of years, or very swift, becoming generalized in less than a year. Some punctate cataracts do not progress at all
What is the difference between an anterior and a posterior cataract?
Site of onset. An anterior cataract forms on the anterior cortex (front of the lens) and a posterior forms on the back, or posterior cortex.
What are suture lines?
All dogs have suture lines. They are the "seams" caused during the formation of the lens, appearing as an inverted Y. In some dogs these lines are prominent; these are sometimes referred to as suture line opacities. In some breeds prominent suture lines are common, in others less so. They do not impair vision. However, punctate cataracts may form on the suture lines- this is NOT the same as prominent suture lines. Punctate cataracts on the suture lines are NOT normal, and a dog diagnosed with them should be rechecked for progression.
If my dog has cataracts, can they be fixed?
Yes, especially if caught early.
Can my vet tell if my dog has cataracts?
Unfortunately, not until they are fairly advanced. In their early stages (when can be most successfully diagnosed and treated). only a canine ophthalmologist can detect cataracts.
I've been told that dogs and/or people (if they live long enough), will get cataracts.
Not all cataracts are considered heritable. Senile cataracts are the result of aging
Are there other reasons other than heredity why a dog may develop cataracts?
Yes. Some cataracts in puppies are caused by nutritional deficiencies. And also, diabetes and Cushing's disease can both cause cataracts in dogs. A Board-certified ophthalmologist can easily tell the difference, however.

The GPCA Health Committee gives thanks to the Havanese Eye Angels Research Team (HEART), an independent organization supporting

research into heritable eye disease in the Havanese, for generously giving us permission us to use information from their educational

Please be a responsible breeder and CERF test your Breeding dogs regularly. Thank you from the GPCA Health Committee.