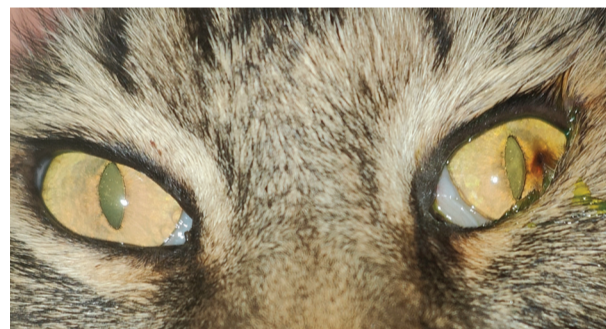


A Sparkle In Her Eye



Zoe Sparkle in for her post operative check up looking suitably regal.

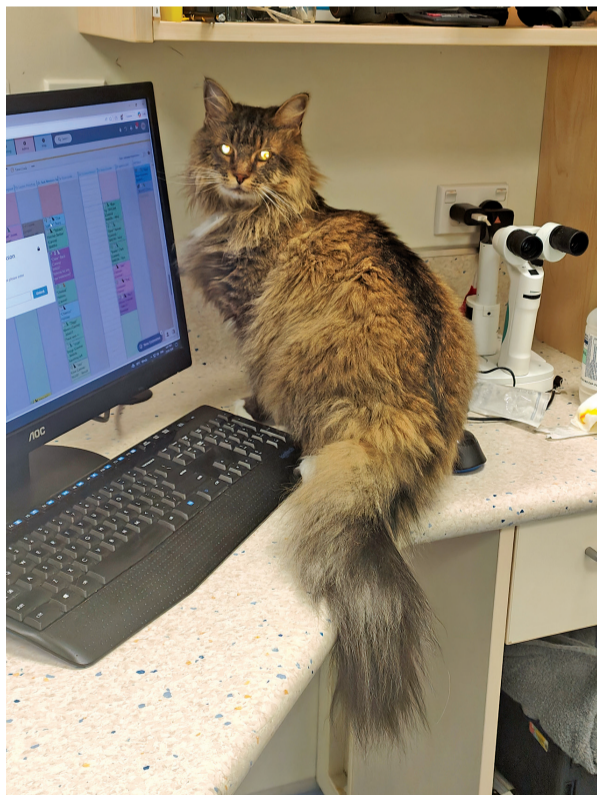
Meet Zoe Sparkle, a beautiful 10 year old domestic long haired cat with a personality to match her name. Zoe was referred to our ophthalmology service by her usual vet to investigate a tricky eye problem that wasn't going away. In addition to her eye problem, Zoe had lost a bit of weight recently, although her weight was stable now and her vets had done the necessary tests to show there were no underlying health concerns.



Zoe at her first appointment. The lower eyelid of the left eye was rolling in and hairs were scratching the surface. The brown stain on the surface is the corneal sequestrum, an area of chronic, end stage, non-healing corneal ulceration.

As soon as Zoe emerged from her carrier, I could see she was squinting with her left eye and it was quite weepy. On closer examination, Zoe was found to have entropion of the left lower eyelid. This is when the eyelid rolls in and hairs scratch the cornea, the surface of the eyeball. She also had a corneal sequestrum of the left eye. This is an odd condition of the feline family where chronic irritation of the cornea can cause a strange black or brown hard rubbery layer to form. This is a painful condition and surgery is normally the only

treatment. There are a few things that cause sequestra to form, such as viral infections, dry eye, abnormal conformation in flat faced breeds like Persian cats, and other types of trauma and chronic irritation. Any member of the feline family can get corneal sequestra, even lions and tigers!



Zoe inspecting the ophthalmology consult room

In Zoe's case, we believe the irritation caused by the hairs on the lower eyelid irritating the cornea caused the sequestrum. We figured the entropion might've been brought on by Zoe's recent weight loss. We sometimes see this occur in middle aged to senior cats as the reduction in fat around the face and behind the eyes causes the eyelids to roll in over time. At that point, if the eye gets sore and they squint a lot, it becomes a vicious cycle, where more squinting results in the lid rolling in permanently and causing further damage to the cornea.

Surgery was recommended for Zoe, with the goals of removing the painful corneal sequestrum, correcting the uncomfortable lower lid entropion, and preventing similar issues from occurring in the currently healthy right eye. This involved blepharoplasty of both lower lids and a superficial keratectomy to remove the sequestrum from the cornea. The different procedures were all performed during one general anaesthetic to get her pain free as soon as possible and to shorten the recovery period.

Zoe was anaesthetised in our ophthalmology theatre and prepped for surgery. Using an operating microscope for magnification, we gently incised around the corneal sequestrum and peeled it off the cornea. A cat's cornea is slightly more than 0.5mm thick so a steady hand is imperative! The left lower lid was shortened to pull it tight and an ellipse of skin removed from the eyelid margin to roll it out just enough to achieve normal function and stop hairs rubbing on the cornea. The right lower lid was shortened to prevent it from rolling in at a later date. The incisions were closed with very fine dissolving sutures and Zoe was taken through to recovery.

Zoe Sparkle went home that day with a course of eye ointment and oral pain relief. She had to stay indoors for her recovery and was required to wear the dreaded Elizabethan Cone to prevent her from rubbing at the stitches. Keeping the cone on was not easy but luckily her family devised an innovative solution, attaching the cone to a collar and a cat harness that happened to be on sale at Briscoes. We saw Zoe 10 days later and her eyes were looking great! Most of the stitches had dissolved, she was holding her eyes open, and her eyelids were in the right position with no hairs rubbing. Her cornea, where we had removed the sequestrum, had fully healed with just a little scar tissue remaining as expected. She was allowed to take her Elizabethan cone off and resume normal activity - news that brought a sparkle to her eye! It is a great privilege to be able to help patients like Zoe Sparkle. We wish her all the best!

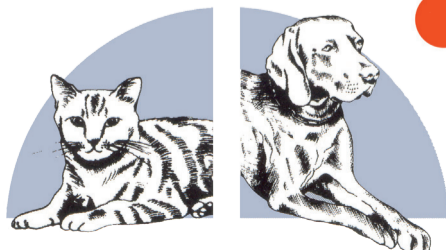
Jack, Newton-Jackson



Zoe's right lower eyelid 10 days post surgery



The left eye 10 days post surgery. The eyelid is no longer rolling in and the cornea is much clearer.



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