

Pet: **Noemi Chatham Animal Rescue**

visit date: **1/24/2024**

**Diagnoses Right Eye:**

Retinal Degeneration, advanced: *1/24/2024, Active.*  
Symbblepharon: *1/24/2024, Active.*

**Diagnoses Left Eye:**

Retinal Degeneration, advanced: *1/24/2024, Active.*

**Findings and Procedures Performed:**

**Medications:**

**Recheck Recommendation:**

is not needed unless there is a problem or call to schedule eye removal

**Overview and Instructions:**

The decrease in Noemi's vision is due to inherited retinal degeneration/dystrophy.

Progressive rod cone degeneration, also known as progressive retinal atrophy or PRA, is due to a defect in an enzyme in the photoreceptors of the retina that helps prevent damage from light. With time, the photoreceptors die. The rod cells responsible for dim light vision are lost first, followed by the cone cells and eventual complete blindness. There is unfortunately no therapy for this disorder. In cats, this often causes blindness before a year of age and they often never had totally normal vision to begin with.

Noemi has a little bit of light perception but no functional vision in either eye.

This is not a painful disease and most pets adjust extremely well to loss of vision. However, we have no therapy for this disorder. Even if we knew she had this disease as a kitten, we can not stop the loss of vision over time. Keeping their environment constant is helpful. Items out of place are confusing for them. Be careful around steps, elevated decks and pools.

The appearance of Noemi's right eye is due to symblepharon.

Symblepharon is the formation of adhesions of the conjunctiva to either itself or the cornea. This results in cloudy or pink areas on the cornea and can reduce vision. It can cause adhesions of the third eyelid or outer eyelids as well limiting how much the eye can open. In Noemi's case, it is not covering she eyeball but has stuck her eyelids tighter, so she can't open this eye as much as normal and can't drain her tears normally.

Symblepharon is almost always the result of a severe herpes virus infection during the first 2 weeks of life. The infection destroys the limbal epithelial stem cells and the eye can no longer generate normal corneal epithelial cells.

In some cats, surgical resection of the adhesions can slightly improve vision but may not significantly improve how much the eyelids can open permanently. Since surgery may not get rid of Noemi's discharge, it is not strongly recommended.

Tears are often a dark red to brown color, and can even look like dried blood. This is a normal color and is influenced to some degree by diet. Persistent tearing is not painful. However, unlike dogs, some cats will from time to time partially close their eyes due to fluid accumulation and even rub (clean) their eyes. They can also leave splatterings of red to black tears on walls and furniture from shaking their head.

Since Noemi doesn't have functional vision, if her right eye is bothering her or her new owner, eye removal would be a decent option. Removal of the eye (Enucleation) costs \$900- \$1100 if done at our practice (with a 15% rescue discount). Complications can occur such as a bacterial infection of the surgery site or the development of fluid accumulation in the orbit, but they are rare. An implant can be placed in the orbit to minimize sinking in of the

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eyelids, but the eyelids are PERMANENTLY closed. Approximately 15% of cats will reject the prosthesis. No long term medical therapy is required.

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If you need a refill of medications, feel free to visit our website at [www.aecassociates.com](http://www.aecassociates.com), click the “Resources” button at the top and select “prescription refill request”. Simply fill out the form and submit your request.

Thank you for allowing us to help in the care of your pet. Please email us at [cary@aecassociates.com](mailto:cary@aecassociates.com) with any questions.

Elena Rodriguez, DVM, MS  
Diplomate, American College of Veterinary  
Ophthalmologists

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