

SETTING

Suburban Veterinary Clinic

CLIENT

Your dog, Pal, a five-year-old female Labrador retriever, has recently been suffering from failing eyesight. On your last visit, the vet did some eye tests and you have come back for the results. You are optimistic that it is only an infection, which will pass.

TASK

- Say that you really thought your dog just had an eye infection, and everything would be fine. You can't believe he is going to go blind. Ask what could have caused this disease.
- Ask the vet about how he will be able to manage when he goes blind.
- Say you really wish there was something you could do to help your dog.
- Ask how you will know when your dog has actually gone blind.
- Say you feel better now you know what to look out for, and will think about joining a local support group.

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VET

The owner has brought in Pal, a five-year-old female Labrador retriever, for the results of some eye tests. The tests show that Pal has a progressive retinal atrophy (PRA: a degenerative disease of the retina). You predict that Pal will go blind within about 12 months.

TASK

- Give the results of the eye test results (degenerative disease of the retina, high chance of blindness within 12 months, irreversible, no treatment, etc.).
- Outline possible causes (e.g., genetic, vitamin deficiency, etc.). Explain there is often no known cause.
- Explain how the dog will compensate for lack of sight (e.g., a strong sense of smell, etc.). Reassure the owner (can lead a relatively normal life, no pain, etc.). Find out about any specific concerns the client has.
- Make recommendations for helping the dog (e.g., teaching new 'help words' such as 'stop', 'slow down', etc.; speaking more to the dog, etc.). Suggest joining a local support group (further advice, additional support, etc.).
- Give information about onset of blindness (e.g., bumping into things, easily startled, reluctance to go out at night, etc.).