

Diagnosing a Lizard With a Swollen Eye

A swollen eye in a reptile can be caused by bacterial or fungal infections, trauma, parasitic problems, or many other things.

By Margaret A. Wissman, DVM, DABVP

I have a question about an anole. I have a female brown/Bahaman anole that I would say is about 3 years old. About a week ago, I noticed that her left eye or area around the eye is really swollen. She can't see out of it because it's swollen so much. She is still eating, though. I'm thinking it was caused by old age or a bacterial infection.

The green anole (*Anolis carolinensis*) can live to be more than 7 years of age. Because you don't know the exact age of your lizard, maybe she is older? Some eye problems can be age-related, but all deserve veterinary care.

An eye can become swollen for many reasons, including bacterial or fungal infections, trauma, fat deposits in the eye (cholesterol), parasitic problems, glaucoma, cataracts, nutritional deficiency or excess and tumors.

If you have ever injured your eye, you know how painful it can be. Even though she is still eating, it would be best if you could find a herp vet who could help you with her. While some eye problems can be related to the aging process, there can sometimes be a secondary infection on top of the initial problem. Please find a herp vet who is willing to take a look at your anole and evaluate her eye. There may be treatments to make her more comfortable, even if the primary problem can't be cured.

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Need a Herp Vet?

If you are looking for a herp-knowledgeable veterinarian in your area, a good place to start is by checking the list of members on the Association of Reptilian and Amphibian Veterinarian (ARAV) web site at www.arav.com. Look for DVMs who appear to maintain actual veterinary offices that you could contact.