

Patient advice and liaison service (PALS)

If you have a compliment, complaint or concern please contact our PALS team on 020 7288 5551 or whh-tr.whitthealthPALS@nhs.net

If you need a large print, audio or translated copy of this leaflet please contact us on 020 7288 3182. We will try our best to meet your needs.

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Date published: 16/08/2019
Review date: 16/08/2021
Ref: EIM/ED/EIC/02

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Eye Injuries/Complaints

A patient's guide



Eye injuries

Now that we have begun the required treatment for your eye injury/complaint, please follow this advice.

If we have placed an eye pad on your eye, leave this in position for..... hours, and only remove the pad to apply the ointment or drops which we have given you.

Wearing dark sunglasses may help if your eye feels sensitive to the light after the pad has been removed.

It is important that you are NOT able to open your eye under the pad.

You must not drive or operate machinery whilst wearing an eye pad.

If you are a smoker, be careful not to set the pad on fire.

Ointment or drops

If we have put local anaesthetic drops in your eye, you must be careful for the next 4-6 hours, and when you are going home, that you do not allow anything to enter your eye, such as dust, etc. You will not be able to feel this and could worsen any existing problem.

When to seek advice

In most cases, you will not need to return for a further check-up. However, if your eyesight becomes more blurred over time or if the pain and redness are getting a lot worse, you should telephone Moorfields Eye Hospital Direct for advice on 020 7566 2345 or attend your local A&E department or the Moorfields 24/7 A&E department which is open for emergency eye problems **only** for a further examination.

Other advice

- Sunglasses may help reduce light sensitivity.
- Avoid rubbing or touching your eye.
- You may also be advised to use lubricants (artificial tear drops or ointment) to help keep your eye moist while it heals.
- If you wear contact lenses, please do not use them until your eye is completely healed (usually within two to four weeks).

Sometimes, though it feels as if the abrasion has healed, you can wake up in the morning several weeks or months later with a feeling that the discomfort from the abrasion has returned. If this happens, **don't panic**, but re-attend the A&E department where they will treat you for this re-current abrasion as before, but you might also be given a lubricant eye ointment for use at night.

There are some drops which we use to examine your eye which can make the pupil appear larger, this will resolve after a few hours.

Apply the ointment or drops times a day for days. It is an antibiotic which will prevent your eye from becoming infected.

- Wash your hands before use
- Stand or sit comfortably
- Tilt your head backwards
- Rest the heel of your hand on your cheek and gently pull down the lower lid, forming a sac
- Look up
- Using the other hand apply the ointment in the centre of the lower lid as had been demonstrated by the nurse or doctor.

If you have been given a follow up appointment, do not apply the ointment immediately beforehand, as we will need to check your vision.

If you are coming for a follow up appointment, please bring any corrective eyewear with you.

Pain

If your eye injury/complaint is causing you pain you should take simple pain relief, i.e. paracetamol or ibuprofen.

If pain relief is not controlling the pain or you develop other symptoms relating to your vision, i.e. blurring, narrowing of your vision, a curtain like occlusion of your vision, severe headaches, or the symptoms you have worsen, please return to the Emergency Department (A&E) or call the Whittington Emergency department on 020 7288 5100, or contact Moorfields Eye Hospital on 020 7566 2345

Corneal Abrasion

A corneal abrasion is a scratch on the cornea – the clear window on the front of your eye. Abrasions are very painful because there are many nerves that supply this part of the eye. With an abrasion, your eye is often watery, red and sensitive to light. Your eyelids may become swollen and your vision may be blurry.

What causes a corneal abrasion?

Scratches to the cornea are common. The cornea could be scratched by a hairbrush, a fingernail or a tree branch. It may be scratched when a small object such as a dust particle hits your eye. If a small foreign body becomes lodged under your eyelid, this can cause scratches on your cornea.

What is the treatment?

A corneal scratch usually heals on its own and the pain settles over 24 to 48 hours, but your eye may feel gritty for several weeks. Eye infection could develop following a scratch to the cornea, so antibiotic eye drops or ointment is prescribed for several days to prevent this in most cases. You may be prescribed a pupil dilating drop, which may help to relieve the painful spasms of the iris, and occasionally, an eye pad may be applied for several hours.

Anaesthetic drops are only given to numb your eye to help with your examination. They are not prescribed to take home as they will slow corneal healing if used regularly. Please remember that the pain will come back once the anaesthetic has worn off, usually after 20 to 60 minutes

Painkillers such as paracetamol or ibuprofen (if you have no medical reason which prevents you using non-steroidal painkillers) are available over the counter at a chemist or on prescription and can be used to help with the pain.