

# Scratch to the eye (corneal abrasion)

## Ophthalmology

Information for Patients

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## What is a corneal abrasion?

A corneal abrasion is a scratch or scrape on the front of the cornea. The cornea is the clear portion of the eye which covers the coloured part (iris) and the black centre (pupil). It's surface is very sensitive.

Examples of injuries we see include paper cuts, injuries from branches and mascara brushes. You will know when you have scratched the cornea as it is very painful. If the pain continues after the injury you are likely to have a scrape (abrasion)

## What are the symptoms of a corneal abrasion?

The most common symptom is pain. This is generally severe pain. Even a very small abrasion can cause a great deal of pain, and most people are unable to open their eyes. You are likely to:

- have severe pain with or without obvious injury.
- have pain that does not go away after an injury.
- feel like something is in your eye.
- know something is in your eye, such as dirt, small particles or a splinter.
- be very sensitive to bright light.
- have watering or tearing from your eye.

**Health information and support is available at [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)  
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

Visit [www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk](http://www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk) for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals  
To give feedback about this information sheet, contact [InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk](mailto:InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk)

## **What should I do if I have these symptoms?**

It is very important that you do not rub your eye as it can make it worse, and if you have something in your eye it may go deeper into your eye.

If you have severe pain after an injury go to Eye Casualty (or Emergency Department if outside of Eye Casualty hours).

You can take painkillers to help with the pain. You should not drive to Eye Casualty.

## **What treatment will I get?**

- We will numb your eye with drops so it is less painful when we look at it.
- We will check the front of your eye to look for foreign bodies such as dirt or a splinter.
- We will check your eye for any infection.
- We will give you antibiotic eye ointment to stop infection and help with comfort, which should be used 4 times a day for 1 week. The eye is at risk of infection when its surface is damaged.
- We may give you drops or ointment to help the surface heal.
- If you wear contact lenses you will be asked not to wear them until the cornea has healed.
- If the abrasion is large i.e. covering more than half of the cornea, we may enlarge (dilate) the pupil to help with the pain.

## **Will the abrasion heal?**

Generally the cornea will heal with no problems. The pain may last from a few hours up to 3 days, depending on the size of the abrasion. If the abrasion is deep or large we will see you in clinic again to make sure it is healing.

Sometimes a corneal abrasion can cause long term issues. You can have recurrent erosion syndrome, where the original injury stops the outer layer healing properly. You can get the same pain as with the abrasion, normally when you wake up in the morning.

It is important to follow the treatment you are given as this can stop this problem. If you get pain in the future you will need long term treatment. You can visit your optician or GP to be referred back to hospital if needed.

## How do I avoid eye injuries?

Wear protective glasses, especially where there is a risk of getting anything in the eye e.g. gardening, painting.

## Contact details

Corneal Specialist Nurse: 07506 827 360 or 07970 940 125

Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm

In case of emergency contact your GP or Leicester's Hospitals Eye Casualty on 0116 258 6273.

Eye Casualty opening times:

Monday to Friday - 8.30am to 4.30pm

Weekends and Bank Holidays - 8.30am to 12.30pm

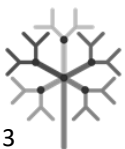
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على هذه المعلومات بلغة أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال على رقم الهاتف الذي يظهر في الأسفل

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Aby uzyskać informacje w innym języku, proszę zadzwonić pod podany niżej numer telefonu

If you would like this information in another language or format such as EasyRead or Braille, please telephone 0116 250 2959 or email [equality@uhl-tr.nhs.uk](mailto:equality@uhl-tr.nhs.uk)



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