

Patient information – Accident and Emergency

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 are 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.

This video on the Moorfields YouTube channel demonstrates how to put in your eye drops:

<https://tinyurl.com/putting-in-drops>

You can also scan this QR code to watch the video:





you with any concerns you may have about the care we provide, guiding you through the different services available at Moorfields. The PALS team can also advise you on how to make a complaint.

Your right to treatment within 18 weeks

Under the NHS constitution, all patients have the right to begin consultant-led treatment within 18 weeks of being referred by their GP. Moorfields is committed to fulfilling this right. For more information about your rights and responsibilities, please visit the Moorfields website and search 'Referrals to treatment (RTT)'. To learn more about your rights under the NHS constitution, visit www.nhs.uk/choiceinthenhs

