

- Wear specialised ultraviolet protection when welding, skiing, mountaineering, using sunbeds and in any other situation where there is a lot of light radiation.
- Take particular care when using hazardous chemicals such as acids or alkalis, washing your hands regularly and protecting the eyes if there is any risk of materials splashing or exploding.

If you think you or your child has a particle in the eye or has been splashed by a chemical or has a minor irritation:

- Wash your hands before touching the eye area.
- Flush the eye with water as soon as possible. Tilt head over a basin or sink with the injured eye pointed down, gently pull down the lower lid and pour a steady stream of lukewarm water over the eye.
- Flush the eye for up to 20 minutes.

Seek urgent medical attention if you/your child has:

- Trouble seeing.
- Severe pain and watering.
- Been exposed to chemicals.
- Something embedded in the eye.

- Blood in the eye.

Seek routine medical attention if you/your child has:

- A red or irritated eye.
- Discharge or crusting from eye.
- A swollen, red, or painful area around the eye or eyelid.
- An eye that is very sensitive to light.

Discharge advice:

Eye Injuries

Recommended to keep for future reference.
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Eye Injuries

Injuries to the eye may occur from scratching, small flying particles, sharp objects, chemical splash burns and radiation damage. This can occur when drilling, sawing, chiselling, grinding, lawn mowing, using house hold chemicals, welding and snow blindness etc. without wearing eye protection.

Corneal Scratches/Abrasions

The cornea is at the front of the eye. It is a clear disc which lies over the front of the coloured part of the eye and the pupil. Minor scratches or abrasions to the cornea are common. The pain can be quite bad, as the cornea is extremely sensitive. The eye may water profusely, and you may be unable to open it.

Foreign Bodies:

Sometimes a small particle becomes slightly embedded in the cornea. This needs to be removed, as it may lead to infection or staining and may cause a small abrasion. It is removed using a cotton wool bud or a fine needle. Local anaesthetic eye drops are used, to make the procedure painless.

Assessment

- Local anaesthetic drop applied.
- Fluorescein staining drops applied (highlights the abrasion or foreign body).
- Foreign body (if present) removed.

Treatment

A small corneal scratch or abrasion usually heals in 24-48 hours. Infection is a complication that may follow an injury or scratch to the cornea. Therefore, it is routine to prescribe antibiotic eye drops or ointment.

- A course of antibiotic eye drops/ointment (chloramphenicol or fusidic acid) is commonly prescribed to prevent an eye infection from developing.
- Patch (only if local anaesthetic applied).

Do:

- ✓ Remove the patch (if applied) after 1 hour.
- ✓ Apply the drops/ointment as prescribed.
- ✓ Take regular paracetamol or ibuprofen.
- ✓ Attend an eye clinic if concerned.

Don't:

- ✗ Rub the eye.
- ✗ Wear contact lenses until 24 hours after the final dose of antibiotic eye drops/ointment.
- ✗ Drive or operate machinery unless you have normal vision in both eyes.
- ✗ Ignore any vision problems.

Follow-up

Depending on the severity of the injury, you may be advised to attend an eye clinic 24-48 hours after the injury. However, go direct to an eye clinic (check your local hospitals) if:

- Your vision becomes worse.
- If you have worsening pain.
- If the eye has not healed after 72 hours.

Preventing Eye Injuries and First Aid

- Always wear eye protection (goggles) when you drill, saw, deal with cement and plaster dust or any activity which causes small flying particles.