

# Eye problems

## Emergency Department Patient Information Leaflet

### Introduction

This leaflet is for people who have visited our Emergency Department with an eye problem. It gives information on how to care for your eye when you get home.

### Corneal abrasions

The doctor or nurse has found an abrasion on the surface of your eye. These injuries are usually caused by the eye being scratched, for example, by a twig or a child's finger. If you have been grinding metal or working in an environment where an object could have got in your eye, this may also cause this type of injury.

### It's painful – why can't I use more of the anaesthetic drops?

Unfortunately, repeated use of the anaesthetic drops will delay healing of the eye, and they are only effective for an hour or less.

You can use painkillers such as paracetamol or ibuprofen, both of which are available at pharmacies, supermarkets and other outlets. Read the information leaflet carefully before taking these medicines.

### Can I drive?

If your vision is affected, you should not drive.

## What treatment is necessary?

We will prescribe antibiotic eye ointment for you and tell you how long to use it for. This will prevent infection and lubricate the surface of your eye while it heals. Eye pads may delay healing but if you have a large abrasion, the doctor or nurse may advise using one for 24 hours.

Take painkillers regularly. The eye usually heals quickly and your symptoms should be getting much better after a couple of days.

## Is there anything else I should do?

If you have a large abrasion, we may ask you to come back to our clinic for review. If not, you only need to return if you experience any of the following problems:

- Persistent pain or visual disturbance.
- Sticky discharge from the eye.

## Conjunctivitis

Conjunctivitis is an inflammation of the clear film that covers the eyeball, commonly caused by either an infection or an allergy. You may notice eye redness, a gritty sensation and discharge.

Allergic conjunctivitis (e.g. due to pollen, cat fur etc.) is common in people who have eczema, asthma or hay fever. The eye may become swollen and is usually red, watery and itchy. You may develop other allergic symptoms such as a rash.

**Please note: if you develop severe symptoms, in particular breathing difficulties or facial swelling, you must go to your nearest Emergency Department immediately.**

## What is the treatment?

Most cases of conjunctivitis are caused by viruses and will not respond to antibiotics. However, we may prescribe antibiotic ointment to use if it is thought that a bacterial infection is present.

It is important to remember that infective conjunctivitis may be very contagious and you should use separate towels and flannels from other people. Wash your hands before and after touching your eyes.

Mild allergic conjunctivitis often clears up without treatment, but it may help your symptoms to use antihistamine eye drops – your pharmacist will be able to advise you.

Do not wear contact lenses until one week after your symptoms have completely cleared up. All equipment and lenses must be sterilised before using your lenses again.

Avoid dusty, smoky atmospheres and bright lights as these will make your eye(s) more painful.

If your eye is sticky, gently clean away any discharge with a warm, damp towel.

### **How long does it take to get better?**

You should notice an improvement after one week and symptoms should have cleared up within two weeks. If not, or if you have any other concerns such as pain in the eye or loss of vision, you should return to the Emergency Department for review.

### **How do I use the eye ointment?**

- Read the instructions on the label and only treat the affected eye.
- Wash your hands. Look in a mirror and tilt your head back slightly.
- Look up. Gently apply a one centimetre strip of ointment inside your lower eyelid (see figure 1). Try not to touch the eye or lid with the end of the tube.

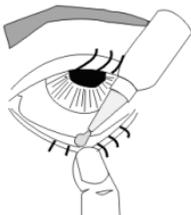


Figure 1 shows where to put the ointment in your eye

- Close your eye and blink a few times. Your vision may be blurred for a short time but do not rub your eye. Do not drive or operate machinery until you can see clearly again.
- Replace the cap and store the ointment in a cool place.

## Can I find out more?

You can find out more from the following web links:

### **NHS Choices**

[Conjunctivitis](#)

[Eye injuries](#)

If you have any questions, or if there is anything you do not understand about this leaflet, please speak to one of our nurses. If you need help when you return home, please contact your GP.

### **This leaflet can be downloaded or printed from:**

[Accident and Emergency](#)

If you have any feedback on this patient information leaflet, please email [patient.information@dgh.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.information@dgh.nhs.uk)

**This leaflet can be made available in large print, audio version and in other languages, please call 0800 073 0510.**

للحصول على هذه النشرة بحجم أكبر، وعلى شكل إصدار صوتي و بلغات أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال بالرقم 08000730510.

此宣传单可提供大字版本、音频版本和其它语言版本，请拨打电话：0800 073 0510。

Ulotka dostępna jest również w dużym druku, wersji audio lub w innym języku. W tym celu zadzwoń pod numer 0800 073 0510.

ਇਹ ਪਰਚਾ ਵੱਡੇ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ, ਬੋਲ ਕੇ ਰੀਕਾਰਡ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਅਤੇ ਦੂਸਰੀਆਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ, 0800 073 0510 ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ ਜੀ।

Aceasta broșura poate fi pusă la dispoziție tipărită cu caractere mari, versiune audio sau în alte limbi, pentru acest lucru va rugăm sunați la 0800 073 0510.

یہ کتابچہ آپ کو بڑے حروف کی لکھائی، سمعی صورت اور دیگر زبانوں میں مہیا کیا جا سکتا ہے۔ برائے مہربانی فون نمبر 08000730510 پر رابطہ کریں۔