

PATIENT INFORMATION: CORNEAL ABRASIONS AND EROSION

WORDS TO KNOW:

Cornea - The clear layer at the front of the eye, it covers and protects the iris and pupil

Pupil - The round opening in the centre of the iris

Epithelium - The outermost layer of the cornea (pronounced: ep-uh-THEE-lee-uhm)

WHAT IS A CORNEAL ABRASION?

A corneal abrasion is a small injury to the epithelium.

Common causes are scratches or scrapes caused by:

- branches
- fingernails
- very dry eyes
- makeup brushes
- rubbing the eye
- contact lens use

SYMPTOMS OF A CORNEAL ABRASION:

- blurred or hazy vision
- excessive tearing
- feeling sensitive to light
- irritation of the surface of the eye
- pain
- redness

HOW IS A CORNEAL ABRASION DETECTED?

The medical provider will use a medical dye called fluorescein (pronounced: FLOR-uh-seen) to highlight the abrasion.

HOW IS A CORNEAL ABRASION TREATED?

The medical provider may do one or more of the following:

- Apply a protective contact lens to shield the eye's surface
- Dilate (open) the pupil to reduce pain
- Patch the eye to limit blinking, which can further irritate the eye
- Use antibiotics to prevent infection
- Use eye drops or ointment to moisten the surface of the eye

RECOVERY PERIOD

The abrasion will typically heal within a day or two. Larger abrasions may take up to a week. Rubbing the eye during the healing is to be avoided. Doing so can extend the time it takes for the eye to heal.

Do not wear contact lenses during the healing period. Ask your ophthalmologist (eye physician) when it is okay to wear your contact lenses again.

PATIENT INFORMATION: CORNEAL ABRASIONS AND EROSION

WHAT IS CORNEAL EROSION?

Corneal erosion occurs when the epithelium of the cornea is not securely attached to the layer beneath it. This most commonly happens at the site of a previous corneal abrasion. It can occur without incident, often upon opening the eyes first thing in the morning.

SYMPTOMS OF CORNEAL EROSION:

- blurred vision
- excessive tearing
- feeling sensitive to light
- irritation of the surface of the eye
- pain
- redness

HOW TO PREVENT CORNEAL INJURIES:

- Wearing safety goggles while:
 - doing yard work
 - playing sports
 - using tools
- Keeping fingernails well-trimmed
- Being careful when applying makeup or using hair tools
- Following all directions if using contact lenses

HOW IS CORNEAL EROSION TREATED?

The treatment for corneal erosion is similar to that of a corneal abrasion.

However, if the corneal erosion re-occurs, the ophthalmologist may need to use one or more of the following treatments:

- Applying a protective contact lens to shield the eye's surface
- Clearing away the damaged tissue
- Performing an "anterior stromal puncture". This is a procedure that helps the epithelium re-attach to the layer below, by making small holes in the damaged tissue.
- Removing a thin layer of corneal tissue with a laser

EYE EMERGENCY?

Misericordia is open 24/7 for patients experiencing urgent eye issues: please present at Patient Registration through our 99 Cornish Avenue entrance.