

# Corneal abrasion (scratch to the eye)

**You have attended the Emergency Department with a corneal abrasion (scratch to the eye). This leaflet explains how to care for your eye at home.**

## What is a corneal abrasion?

This is a scratch to the clear layer that covers the front part of the eye. Generally these are associated with tearing (your eyes water) and a lot of pain. The cornea is one of the most pain-sensitive tissues in our body. Usually a scratch heals between 2-7 days, depending on the size.

## Caring for your eye at home

- Keeping your eye closed makes the eye less painful and helps. The more you rest your good eye, the better your injured eye will feel.
- Do not rub your eye.
- Do not drive or operate machinery while your eye is injured, and be careful using stairs. Your ability to judge distances is likely to be impaired.
- Use paracetamol or ibuprofen as needed for pain.

## Eye drops

In order to prevent infection in your eye after an eye injury, you may be prescribed a course of eye drops and ointment containing an antibiotic called chloramphenicol, although this is not suitable for all patients. Most people will need to take the eye drops four times a day, and use the ointment at night before bed, for seven days.

If you normally wear contact lenses, you should not do so until your eye injury has completely healed. If you are prescribed antibiotic eye drops, you should not start wearing your contact lenses again until 24 hours after finishing your treatment.

## Further tests or treatment

You may be advised by the Emergency Department team to go to Eye Casualty. This is located on Level 2 Eye Block and is open:

Monday to Friday 8.30am – 5.00pm Saturday, Sunday and Bank Holidays 9.00am – 12.30pm  
Closed Christmas Day and New Year's Day.

## What to look out for

Go back to the nearest Emergency Department or Eye Casualty if you experience any of the following:

- Pain increases in your eye or your vision changes.
- The injury to your eye seems to be getting larger.
- You develop any kind of discharge from the injured eye.
- Swelling and/or inflammation (soreness) develops around the affected eye.
- An oral temperature above 38° C (102° F) develops.

## **Tell us your views**

If you wish to discuss any aspect of your treatment and care, please speak to a senior member of staff or to the nurse looking after you. The matrons are also available during normal working hours and they welcome your views.

You can also pick up a copy of the Trust leaflet called 'Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)', which explains how you can raise concerns or give feedback on your experience at the hospital.

## **Friends and Family Test**

Whatever your experience you can give feedback by answering the Friends & Family test question – Overall, how was your experience of our service? – by going online [www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk/get-in-touch/friends-and-family-survey.htm](http://www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk/get-in-touch/friends-and-family-survey.htm).

To find out more about our Trust visit [www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk](http://www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk)

**Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.**

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