

Patient information factsheet

Corneal abrasion

A corneal abrasion is a scratch or a graze on the clear front surface of the eye (or the cornea). It is usually caused by a finger nail or another object catching the eye.

Symptoms

- a red and watering eye
- severe pain
- sensitivity to light
- a gritty 'foreign body' sensation when you blink

Treating a corneal abrasion

If you suspect you may have a corneal abrasion you should book an appointment with your GP who will aim to see you within 24 hours. If a high speed or sharp object was involved in the injury or if there was significant force, contact the eye casualty department on telephone: **023 8120 6592**.

Corneal abrasions usually heal themselves within two to three days, depending on their size. As your abrasion heals, you should notice less pain, light sensitivity and watering.

In the meantime, you can get an antibiotic ointment called chloramphenicol from your local pharmacist. Apply this ointment to the affected eye four times a day for one week to help prevent infection and reduce the 'foreign body' sensation. Padding your eye for 24 hours may also help with the discomfort.

If your eye does not feel better after 48 hours of using chloramphenicol ointment, contact eye casualty on telephone: **023 8120 6592**.

Contact lens wearers

If you wear contact lenses and you have symptoms of a corneal abrasion, take your lenses out and contact eye casualty directly on telephone: **023 8120 6592**.

Further information

For further information, please speak to a member of our eye casualty team on telephone: **023 8120 6592**.

Useful links

www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Eyehealth/Pages/Eyesafety.aspx

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Contact us

Eye unit
Southampton General Hospital
Tremona Road
Southampton
SO16 6YD

If you need a translation of this document, an interpreter or a version in large print, Braille or on audiotape, please telephone 023 8120 4688 for help.