

Eye Injury: Corneal Abrasion

Your child has had a corneal abrasion (KOR nee ul uh BRAY zhun). The cornea is the clear part of the eye that covers the iris (colored part of the eye) and pupil (Picture 1). Normally, the cornea should be clear and transparent.

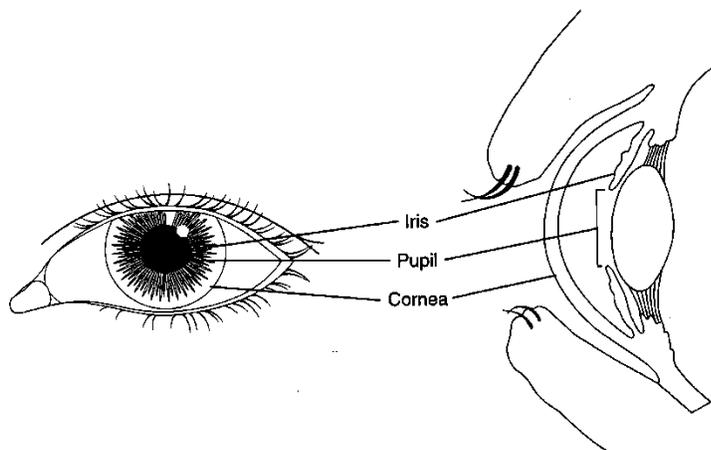
Causes

An abrasion is an injury caused by something scratching or rubbing the surface of the eye. Trauma (being hit in the eye) is the most common cause of corneal abrasion. A foreign substance in the eye may also injure it. Even a very tiny fleck of dirt can cause injury. Contact lenses can also scratch the eye. Soaps, detergents or other chemicals can cause an abrasion if they splash in the eye.

Symptoms

Your child may have some or all of these symptoms:

- Pain and tears in the eye
- Eyes sensitive to light
- Feeling of “something in the eye,” especially with blinking
- In infants, very fussy (irritable)
- Headache
- Blurred vision



Picture 1 The cornea is the clear covering of the iris and pupil.

Diagnosis

To see an abrasion, the doctor will put some numbing drops and yellow dye into the eye and shine a blue light. The yellow dye will stain an area of the eye and show up if there is an abrasion.

Treatment

Most corneal abrasions heal in 24 to 48 hours. In the meantime, the doctor may suggest rest and giving Tylenol® or Motrin® for pain relief. Sometimes the doctor suggests that the child wear an eye patch, but patching is not always needed. Your doctor may prescribe eye drops or ointment. See (Helping Hand HH-V-14, *Eye Drops*). Follow-up with your doctor may be daily or as directed.

What you can do

If you think your child has gotten something in his eye, first try to rinse out the eye by pouring clean water into it.

- If a chemical, such as a household cleaner, splashes a child's eye, wash the eye for 10 minutes and seek medical help immediately.
- Sometimes blinking or pulling the upper eyelid over the lower eyelid may remove a particle from under the eyelid.
- Teach your child not to rub the eye. You can use a soft tissue or cloth to gently lift something from the white part of the eye, but if it is on the cornea, do not try to remove it. If you cannot remove it or if you still feel there is something in the eye, seek medical help.

Protect your child's eyes

- Your child should wear protective eyewear for all sports where there is a risk of eye injury. Protective eyewear includes goggles, facemasks or sunglasses.
- Do not let children play with fireworks. About a third of all fireworks-related eye injuries result in permanent blindness.

When to call the doctor

Call your child's doctor if any of these things occurs:

- Drainage from the eye
- Pain or redness
- Baby gets a lot fussier
- Decreased vision
- You cannot remove the substance or you feel there is still something in the eye.

If you have any questions, be sure to ask your child's doctor or nurse.