

# KERATITIS



## BASIC INFORMATION

### DESCRIPTION

A term used to describe a variety of conditions where there is inflammation, infection, or irritation of the cornea. The cornea is the clear membrane on the front of the eye that covers the iris and the pupil.

### FREQUENT SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- Symptoms may be mild to severe.
- Eye pain.
- Redness and itching of the eye.
- Feeling that there is something in the eye.
- Photophobia (sensitivity to light).
- Tearing or discharge of the eye.
- Blurry vision.

### CAUSES

There are many causes and types of keratitis. In many cases, an injury to the cornea has allowed an infection to occur. Prompt treatment is important.

### RISK INCREASES WITH

- Viral, bacterial, or fungal infection. The most common is the same virus that causes cold sores.
- Drying of the eye, caused by an eyelid disorder or insufficient tear formation.
- Foreign object in the eye.
- Intense light, such as from welding arcs or the reflection of intense sunlight from snow or water. Symptoms may not appear for 24 hours after exposure.
- Vitamin A deficiency (rare in normal diet).
- Allergy or sensitivity to eye cosmetics, air pollution, airborne particles (pollen, dust, mold, or yeasts), and other allergens.

### PREVENTIVE MEASURES

- Wear protective glasses or goggles if work or sports activity involves eye hazards.
- Eat a well-balanced diet that contains sufficient vitamin A, or take a multiple-vitamin containing vitamin A.
- For dry-eyes, use eye drops recommended by your health care provider.
- Don't share eye makeup.
- Avoid rubbing the eyes when you have cold sores.
- Follow instructions provided with contact lenses for cleaning and length of wearing time.

### EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Depends on the cause. With early treatment, most types of keratitis are curable. It may take several months.

### POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

- Glaucoma.
- Ulceration of the cornea.
- Permanent scarring in the eye.
- Vision loss.



## DIAGNOSIS & TREATMENT

### GENERAL MEASURES

- A special eye exam can diagnose keratitis. A vision test and other medical tests may be done. You may be referred to an eye care provider (ophthalmologist).
- Treatment usually involves eye medication.
- Cool compresses applied to the closed eye may help.
- Surgery to replace the cornea (severe cases only).

### MEDICATIONS

- Antibiotic, antifungal, or antiviral eyedrops or ointments are prescribed depending on the infection.
- Steroid eyedrops may be prescribed.
- Don't treat any eye inflammation without medical advice. Don't use nonprescription eyedrops containing topical corticosteroids. These may worsen the condition or cause eyeball perforation.

### ACTIVITY

No limits.

### DIET

No special diet.



## NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IF

- You or a family member has symptoms of keratitis. Get treatment right away.
- Your vision changes in any way.

Special notes:

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More notes on the back of this page