

A **corneal abrasion** is an injury to the surface of the cornea, the clear window at the front of the eye. It can be very painful and can make your eye water. It is often caused by a finger nail or paper which scratches the eye. It can also be caused when a foreign body goes into the eye and then washes out but leaves a corneal abrasion. Corneal abrasions can make you feel that something is still in the eye.

You will likely be treated by an Emergency Nurse Practitioner or Doctor, who will look at your eye, while you sit at a machine called a slit lamp. This machine gives your care provider a detailed and magnified view of your eye.

Local anaesthetic drops may be used if your eye is too painful to open. This will give you instant relief but only lasts 15 minutes. Unfortunately, these drops have to be used sparingly as they delay healing of the cornea.

An orange dye called fluorescein will be put into the injured eye and this will show up the injury when a blue light is applied.

If a corneal abrasion is noted, you will be prescribed antibiotic ointment which should be applied 4 times per

day for 5 days, then use it at night only for 2 weeks. Your care provider will demonstrate how this should be applied.

If the abrasion is large, your care provider may speak to the on call ophthalmology team for advice or arrange follow up at the Princess Alexandra Eye Pavilion (PAEP) which is the eye hospital based at Lauriston Place, Edinburgh. It is important that you attend any appointments at the PAEP to check on healing of the cornea and reduce the risk of corneal erosion.

**Corneal erosion** is when the cornea fails to heal properly. The surface tissue becomes prone to lifting off when you open your eye and it can be painful. Corneal erosion is treated the same way as corneal abrasion but you may be advised to use frequent lubricants for some months until the cornea is healed and comfortable.

**Lubricants** are artificial tears that are instilled into the eye frequently. Lubricants are available as drops or cream and can be purchased from your chemist. Your care provider may recommend that you use a lubricant cream at bedtime and drops throughout the day.

You should return to the Emergency Department if you develop any deterioration in vision, or the pain becomes much worse despite simple painkillers such as Paracetamol.

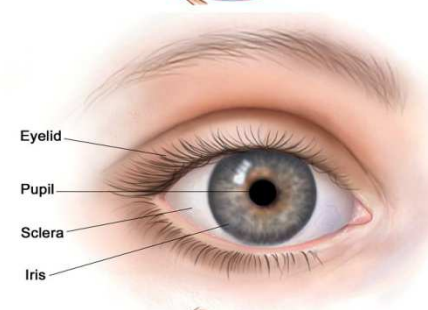
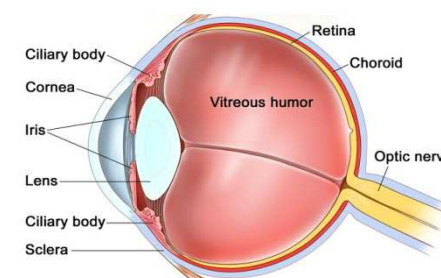
If you wear contact lenses please do not wear them until the cornea has completely healed (usually 2-4 weeks). Your optician can review your eye prior to contact lens use.

Useful links for self management include:

- [www.nhsinform.co.uk](http://www.nhsinform.co.uk)
- [www.patient.co.uk](http://www.patient.co.uk)

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# Corneal Abrasion



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