Recurrent corneal erosion syndrome

What is recurrent corneal erosion syndrome?
Recurrent corneal erosion syndrome is a common condition that affects the cornea – the clear window on the front of your eye.

An initial scratch on your cornea damages its outermost layer and heals with a scar. This scar can stick to the underside of your eyelid, usually while you are sleeping, or after you have been in dry, dusty environments.

When you open your eye, the scar may be stripped off and the damage reappears. This will usually make your eye painful and watery in the night or first thing in the morning, and you may also experience blurring of your vision and light sensitivity. This may happen many months or years after the initial injury and may happen repeatedly.

What is the treatment?
An antibiotic ointment or drop is usually prescribed to prevent infection. You may be prescribed a pupil dilating drop, which may help to relieve the painful spasms of the iris. Painkillers such as paracetamol or ibuprofen (if you have no medical reason which prevents you using non-steroidal painkillers) are available over the counter at a chemist or on prescription and can be used to help with the pain. Anaesthetic drops are only given to numb your eye to help with your examination. They are not prescribed to take home as they will slow corneal healing if used regularly. The erosion episode will take a few hours to days to settle.

How can I prevent it from happening again?
The way to avoid recurrent erosions is by using lubricating eye drops and ointment long-term. Regular use of thick eye ointment at night, and artificial tear drops during the day provides a barrier between...
the lid and the cornea. This prevents the scar from sticking to the underside of the eyelid. Patients are often advised to continue the lubrication treatment for several months to prevent recurrence even if you do not experience any symptoms.

**What if recurrences are frequent?**
If you have frequent recurrences despite being on maximum regular lubrication, additional treatment options may be considered such as removing the excess scar tissue from the cornea or fitting a long-term contact lens, known as a bandage contact lens.

**Are there any long-term complications?**
Complications are rare with recurrent corneal erosion syndrome. Infection may occur. Only very few patients will develop permanent corneal scarring, which may affect their vision.

**When to seek advice**
If your eye becomes more red or painful or your sight becomes more blurred, you should telephone Moorfields Eye Hospital Direct for advice on 020 7566 2345 or attend your local A&E department or the Moorfields 24/7 A&E department which is open for emergency eye problems only for a further examination.
treatment within 18 weeks of being referred by their GP. Moorfields is committed to fulfilling this right, but if you feel that we have failed to do so, please contact our patient advice and liaison service (PALS) who will be able to advise you further – see above for contact details. For more information about your rights under the NHS constitution, please visit www.nhs.uk/choiceinthenhs.