



Patient information: accident and emergency

Subconjunctival haemorrhage

A subconjunctival haemorrhage is a bleed underneath the conjunctiva- the transparent layer which lies over the white of the eye (the sclera). This bleeding is caused by the leaking of a blood vessel in the conjunctiva.

Signs and symptoms

The haemorrhage usually appears suddenly as a red patch or spot on the white of the eye. It may be flat or occasionally slightly raised above the surface of the eye. It is usually painless and does not affect your eyesight, but it can sometimes cause an ache or discomfort in your eye. Sometimes, you might not notice it until somebody draws your attention to it.

Causes

Subconjunctival haemorrhages are very common because the blood vessels in the conjunctiva are very fragile and can easily bleed a little. In most cases, there is no specific cause but the following are associated with the condition: strenuous activities (like carrying heavy shopping bags or lifting heavy things), coughing and sneezing,

vomiting, high blood pressure and taking blood-thinning medications such as aspirin or warfarin.

Other potential causes include injury to the eye or rubbing the eye forcefully. A subconjunctival haemorrhage can also happen following an eye operation.

What will happen at hospital?

The doctor or nurse practitioner will check your vision, examine your eye with a slit lamp, and check your blood pressure if necessary.

Treatment

This condition usually does not require any treatment and will settle by itself within a week or two. If your eye is uncomfortable, lubricating eye drops may be recommended.

Please note: if you have repeated subconjunctival haemorrhages, you should inform your GP.

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constitution, please visit
www.nhs.uk/choiceinthenhs.

Moorfields Direct telephone helpline

Phone: 020 7566 2345
Monday-Friday, 8.30am-9pm
Saturday, 9am-5pm
Information and advice on eye
conditions and treatments from
experienced ophthalmic-trained nurses.

Patient advice and liaison service (PALS)

Phone: 020 7566 2324 or 020 7566 2325

Email: moorfields.pals@nhs.net

Moorfields' PALS team provides confidential advice and support to help you with any concerns you may have about the care we provide, guiding you through the different services available at Moorfields. The PALS team can also advise you on how to make a complaint.

Your right to treatment within 18 weeks

Under the NHS constitution, all patients have the right to begin consultant-led 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

