



Patient information: Accident and Emergency

Ocular foreign body

What is an ocular foreign body?

An ocular foreign body is a common condition, in which a small particle (such as a piece of grit or small rust particle) becomes stuck on your eye. If the object becomes stuck on the cornea – the front window of your eye – this is called a corneal foreign body. If the object is stuck under your lid, this is called a sub-tarsal foreign body, which may cause scratches to the surface of your cornea. If a corneal foreign body is metal, a small ring of rust may form around it and this may also need to be removed.

What are the symptoms?

The surface of your eye contains many nerves, which makes it very sensitive to any scratch or foreign body on the front of your eye. Your eye may be painful, red, watery and light sensitive and your vision may be blurred.

What is the treatment?

The doctor or nurse will use local anaesthetic eye drops to numb your eye and will remove the foreign body with a cotton bud or a small sterile needle. The feeling of “something in the eye” or pain may return after the anaesthetic drops wear off, usually between 20 minutes to an hour later. The pain

usually lessens in a few days as your eye heals, but your eye may feel gritty for a few weeks. Anaesthetic drops cannot be prescribed to take home as regular use will slow down the healing of your eye. Pain relief such as paracetamol or ibuprofen (provided you have no medical reason which prevents you from using non-steroidal painkillers), are available over the counter at a chemist or on prescription and can be used to help with the pain.

Antibiotic drops or ointment may be prescribed to prevent infections from developing. Lubricants (artificial tear drops) are available on prescription or over the counter to help keep your eye comfortable while it heals. You may be asked to return for a follow-up appointment if there is any leftover foreign body or signs of infection/inflammation.

This video on the Moorfields YouTube channel demonstrates how to put in your eye drops:

<https://tinyurl.com/putting-in-drops>



If your eye becomes increasingly red or painful, your sight becomes more blurred or you see white patches getting bigger on the cornea, you should call Moorfields Direct for advice (details opposite) or go to your local A&E department. You can also go to Moorfields A&E department in City Road (open 24/7 for emergency eye problems only) for a further examination.

**Moorfields Eye Hospital NHS
Foundation Trust
City Road, London EC1V 2PD
Phone: 020 7253 3411
www.moorfields.nhs.uk**

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.

Phone: 020 7566 2324 or 020 7566 2325

Email: moorfields.pals@nhs.net

Opening hours: Monday to Friday, except bank holidays

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.

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. For more information about your rights and responsibilities, please visit the Moorfields website and search 'Referrals to treatment (RTT)'. To learn more about your rights under the NHS constitution, visit www.nhs.uk/choiceinthenhs