



Microbial Keratitis

What is microbial Keratitis?

Microbial Keratitis is an infection on the cornea – the clear window on the front of the eye. It is often related to contact lens wear or, less commonly, due to a scratch on the surface of the eye or a pre-existing eye condition. Infection is more likely with incorrect contact lens cleaning or storage, incorrect use of disposable lenses or wearing lenses overnight. Microbial keratitis can be a serious condition if not treated and can sometimes affect your vision and may leave a scar, even with the correct treatment.

What are the symptoms of Microbial Keratitis?

Microbial Keratitis causes a painful red eye and sometimes blurred vision. At first, it feels as though there is something in your eye. Your eye becomes increasingly painful due to the development of an ulcer on the surface of the cornea. Sometimes, you can see this ulcer, which looks like a small white spot on the cornea over the coloured part of your eye.

What tests are required?

In some cases, after using local anaesthetic drops to numb your eye, we take a sample from the corneal

ulcer to allow us to find out which bacteria are causing the infection and plan appropriate treatment. Results can sometimes take several days to come back depending on the bacteria we are testing for.

What is the treatment?

Antibiotic drops are usually used. You are likely to need to put the drops in very frequently in the first instance. This can be up to every hour and sometimes you will need to continue through the night if the infection is severe. The frequency of the drops is then reduced once the ulcer is seen to be reducing in size. Sometimes, your antibiotics may be changed if there is no sign of improvement after several days, or if the corneal sample results show another drop would be more appropriate. It is very important that you put your drops in regularly as these types of infections can get much worse if not treated properly.

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

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



You can also scan this QR code to watch the video:



Please do not wear contact lenses while the infection is present and for a few weeks after the infection clears, as this can lead to a serious deterioration in your condition. After the infection is fully recovered, please return to your contact lens practitioner to check your contact lens fit and use.

Further check-ups

In some cases, you will be asked to return in a few days to see if the infection is improving with the treatment. However, if the infection is mild, then you may be asked to return only if your symptoms get worse.

When to seek advice

If your eyesight becomes more blurred, if your eye becomes more red or painful rather than improving, or if you can see a white spot getting bigger on the cornea 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. You can also log on to the Moorfields emergency online video consultation service at

<https://www.moorfields.nhs.uk/emergency-care>

General advice for contact lens wearers

Contact lens wearers should follow the following rules to minimise the risk of contact lens related eye infection:

- Always wash, rinse and dry your hands thoroughly before handling your lenses.
- Do not re-use the lenses beyond their use time and never re-use daily disposable lenses.
- Do not wear contact lenses when your eyes are red and sore.
- Do not wear contact lenses while you are having a shower or a bath or going swimming.
- Do not wear contact lenses while sleeping.
- Do not bring your lenses into contact with tap water.
- For non-daily disposable lenses, clean your lenses as advised, keep containers clean, and regularly change your containers and lens solutions.

Useful contacts

Moorfields A&E at City Road, 162 City Road, London EC1V 2PD
Telephone switchboard:
020 7253 3411

This is a 24 hour service for eye emergencies only. Following triage, you may be seen on the day or informed that no treatment is needed at the service and advised to see your GP or optician. Alternatively, you may be



booked into an urgent care clinic at City Road for a different day.

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

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
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.

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. 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

