



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.

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



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 more information about your rights under the NHS constitution, visit www.nhs.uk/choiceinthenhs

