



# SCRATCHED CORNEA

## CAUSES, SYMPTOMS AND TREATMENT

If you've ever scratched your cornea before, you'll probably never forget how it felt. Painful. Like there's sandpaper in your eye. So what are the ways that people can scratch their cornea? And, what should they do about it?

### Causes

- Being poked in the eye by, for example, a fingernail or another sharp object.
- Pieces of dirt, sand or sawdust getting caught under your eyelid.
- Contact lenses that don't fit, are ripped or have dirt/dust on them.
- Aggressively rubbing your eye when something is in it.
- Certain kinds of eye infections.

When something gets in your eye, your natural reaction is to rub it. However, you should avoid doing that. Rubbing it can cause the scratch. Instead, you can blink, gently pull your upper lid over your lower one or rinse your eye out with tap water or saline solution.

After doing those things, if your discomfort continues, you should see an eye doctor as soon as you can.

### Symptoms

A scratched cornea causes pain that doesn't go away. Symptoms can include:

- Pain when opening and closing your eye
- Feeling as if sand or dirt is in your eye
- Redness and tearing
- Light sensitivity
- Blurry vision

### Treatment

Here are a few ways to alleviate pain or eye redness:

- Carefully inspect the eye for small particles that may be stuck under the eyelid and causing symptoms.
- Flush the eye with clean water or saline solution once or twice to remove any particles or to soothe the eye surface. Do not rinse the eye more than a few times. Doing so can make the situation worse.
- Avoid rubbing or pressing on the eye.
- Use a cool wet cloth to alleviate swelling and pain.
- If outside, wear sunglasses to avoid irritation from the sun.

If you experience intense pain or blurred vision, it is essential that you seek medical attention immediately, particularly if you believe the particle may be wood, glass or metal. An eye doctor will carefully examine your eye and may prescribe pain medication or antibiotic eye drops to guard against infection.

If your eye hurts, the doctor may suggest over-the-counter pain medication. If it's a large abrasion, you may need to keep the eye covered with gauze or eye patch for a few days. Be sure to follow your doctors advice and if you continue to feel pain, contact them immediately.