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Recurrent Corneal Erosion

Patient information:

This is a fairly common condition, which can occur months or even years after an injury or scratch to the cornea.

It is due to imperfect healing at the time of the original injury, which leaves a loose area of surface epithelium on the cornea. The area can dry out while you are asleep and become dislodged by the eyelids when you open your eyes in the morning.

Signs and Symptoms

Severe pain on waking, redness, watery eyes and light sensitivity. Usually the symptoms settle very quickly during the day and there is often nothing abnormal to be seen by the doctor as the epithelium heals so quickly. The diagnosis is therefore usually made on the story given by the patient.

Treatment

The erosion is initially treated with an antibiotic ointment and even in severe cases usually heals within 2-3 days. A lubricating ointment is then used last thing at night for several months to prevent another erosion occurring together with regular lubricating eye drops during the day. By keeping the cornea and inner surface of the eyelid lubricated in this way, it prevents the eye drying out and helps the cornea heal properly.

Disclaimer

The information provided in this document is intended as a useful aid to general practitioners, optometrists and patients. It is impossible to diagnose and treat patients adequately without a thorough eye examination by a qualified ophthalmologist, optometrist or your general practitioner. Hopefully the information will be of use prior to and following a consultation which it supplements and does not replace.

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