

Subconjunctival haemorrhage

This Eye Casualty advice sheet explains what subconjunctival haemorrhage is and how it is managed. If you have any queries, please speak to your doctor or nurse.

What is it?

A subconjunctival haemorrhage is a tiny bleed from one of the small blood vessels on the surface of the eye (similar to a bruise). It can be caused by high blood pressure or by straining when you cough or sneeze. Sometimes it can just happen suddenly, without any obvious known cause.

Signs and symptoms

A subconjunctival haemorrhage may cause your eye to look very red. This may seem alarming, and it may appear worse before it gets better. However, it shouldn't be painful and it shouldn't affect your vision. Your eye may feel slightly different to normal and you may notice a gritty feeling.

What is the treatment?

A subconjunctival haemorrhage will heal on its own. It can usually take two to three weeks to settle and during this time you might notice a slight yellow tinge to the white of your eye.

If your eye feels gritty, your local pharmacist (chemist) can give you lubricating eye drops (such as hypromellose drops or viscotears gel) to soothe the eye.

For a subconjunctival haemorrhage you do not need to see your GP or optician. You should ask your GP practice nurse to check your blood pressure just in case this is an underlying cause.

If you bruise or bleed easily on other parts of your body, especially if you are taking aspirin or warfarin tablets, your GP may organise further tests.

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If you notice that your vision is reduced, please attend Eye Casualty.

Contact us

If you have got a minor eye problem, please seek advice from your GP, optician or pharmacist. If you think your problem might be urgent, please attend Eye Casualty.

Eye Casualty (Reading):	Mon-Fri 9am-5pm; Sat & Sun & bank holidays 9am-12.30pm; Closed Christmas Day & New Year's Day.
Eye Casualty: Prince Charles Eye Unit (Windsor):	Mon-Fri 9am-5pm; Sat 9am- 13.00pm; Closed Sun & bank holidays.

Outside of Eye Casualty hours you should contact NHS 111 or if urgent, visit the Emergency Department (A&E) at the Royal Berkshire Hospital.

Further information

Visit the Trust website at www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

This document can be made available in other languages and formats upon request.

Eye Casualty, February 2019

Review due: February 2021