

CORNEAL ULCER – PREVENT VISION LOSS

Corneal Ulcers May Result in Loss of Vision or Blindness

Corneal Ulcers are Most Common Among Individuals Aged 40 and Over

The eyes are part of everyday function and are considered critical organs for their delicate nature and the function they provide. The cornea is the outermost layer protecting the eye and has no blood vessels to protect it from infection. It is critical to take preventative measures to protect and take care of your eyes.

Please use this guide as a resource for knowledge and information on corneal ulcers, their cause, symptoms and treatment.

01 | What Are Corneal Ulcers?

A corneal ulcer is an open sore or defect with inflammation on the cornea of the eye. With appropriate and timely treatment, the majority of corneal ulcers will improve with minimal adverse effect on vision. Although most corneal ulcers will cause some degree of scarring, the scar will often not cause any visual loss. If the ulcer is deep, dense, and central, scarring will cause some permanent changes in vision. Ulcers are divided into infectious and non-infectious categories depending on the cause of the ulcer.

02 | Cause

There are a wide variety of causes of corneal ulcers, including infection, physical and chemical trauma, corneal drying and exposure, and contact lens over-wear and misuse. Most cases of corneal ulcers are due to a bacterial infection that invades the cornea; often following an eye injury, trauma or other damage. People who wear contact lenses are much more likely have an eye injury that can lead to an ulcer, because of contact lenses rubbing and scratching the surface of the eye. Other causes of corneal ulcers are:

- Acanthamoeba
- Herpes
- Wearing contact lenses while swimming
- Complication developing from immune disorders
- MRSA

03 | Symptoms

A corneal ulcer will often appear as a gray to white opaque or translucent area on the normally transparent cornea. Some corneal ulcers may be too small to see without adequate magnification and illumination.

- Redness
- Swelling
- Pain
- Tearing
- Puss discharge
- Blurry vision

04 | Treatment

If you develop a corneal ulcer, you should be examined promptly by an ophthalmologist. Treatment will be focused on the cause of the ulcer and alleviating as much pain and swelling as possible. If the eye is subject to infection, anti-infective agents will be prescribed via drops, ointments or oral medication. Eyes that suffer excessive dryness or corneal exposure will be prescribed tear substitutes, accompanied by an eye patch or bandage contact lens. Ulcers that were a result of an injury or contact to a harsh chemical require any debris or matter to be removed and cleaned off the eye. Medications to combat swelling, infection and scarring of the cornea are required after any intensive cleaning or abrasion to the eye.. In severe and rare cases a corneal transplant may be necessary to combat a perforated cornea.

For more information on corneal ulcers and ophthalmology, please visit: <http://www.ao.org>

*Did You Know?
Most corneal ulcers are preventable*

References

- http://www.medicinenet.com/corneal_ulcer/article.htm
- <http://www.allaboutvision.com/conditions/corneal-ulcer.htm>