



## Eye Injuries & Irritation

### Signs & Symptoms

Signs and symptoms depend on the cause.

Common symptoms are:

- Pain and/or swelling in or around the eye(s).
- The eyes burn, are dry, and/or itch.

### Causes

#### For Eye Injuries

Causes include:

- A physical blow to the eye.
- Harsh chemicals.
- A foreign body is stuck in the eye.

#### For Eye Irritation

Causes include:

- Particles in the eye.
- Too much sun exposure.
- Low humidity.
- Strong wind.
- Scratches from contact lenses.

Other causes are allergies, infections, and conditions that make the eyes dry. With aging, the eyes can get irritated more easily because they make less tears.

### Treatment

Mild eye irritations and injuries can be treated with self-care. More serious problems need medical care.



*Eye goggles help protect the eyes from harsh chemicals.*

### Questions to Ask

Do any of these problems occur?

- A foreign body is stuck in the eye.
- One or both eyes were exposed to acid, alkali, or any harmful chemicals.

NO



{**Note:** Give first aid for the problem as needed. See on next page.}

Did super glue get in the eye(s)? {**Note:** Before emergency care, do not try to pry the eye(s) open. Rinse the eyes with warm tap water for 20 to 30 minutes.}

NO



Do any of these problems occur?

- A severe blow to the eye with or without a broken bone of the face.
- Vision loss, blurred vision, double vision, or blood in the pupil after an eye injury.
- A cut to the eye or eyelid.
- **Signs of a severe allergic reaction** (see at [www.HealthyLearn.com](http://www.HealthyLearn.com)) after a bite or sting to the eye. {**Note:** Before immediate care, use emergency kit as directed.}

NO



{**Note:** Give first aid for the problem as needed. See on next page.}

Do you have eye pain or visual changes after exposure to a welder's flame or other ultraviolet source?

NO



Do you have a contact lens in an eye and can't find it or remove it or does it cause eye pain?

NO



*Flowchart continued on next page*



## Eye Injuries & Irritation, Continued

Is eye pain present?

YES



NO



## Self-Care / First Aid

### For a Foreign Body Sticking Into the Eye

- Do not remove the object.
- Don't press on, touch, or rub the eye.
- Cover the injured eye with a clean object, such as a paper cup that will shield, but not touch the eye or the foreign object. Use tape to hold the cup in place without putting pressure on the eye or the foreign object.
- Gently cover the uninjured eye with a clean bandage and tape, too. This helps to keep the injured eye still. Get Immediate Care!

### For Harmful Chemicals in the Eye(s)

- Flush the eye(s) with water immediately!
- Hold the injured eye open with your thumb and forefinger. At the faucet or with a pitcher or other clean container, flush the eye with a lot of water. Start at the inside corner and pour downward to the outside corner. This lets the water drain away from the body and keeps it from getting in the other eye.
- Keep pouring the water for 10 to 30 or more minutes. Flush the eye with water until you get medical help.
- If both eyes are injured, pour water over both eyes at the same time. Or, flush one eye at a time with water. Switch back and forth quickly to treat both eyes. Or, place the face in a sink or container filled with water. Tell the person to move his or her eyelids up and down and remove the face from the water to take breaths. Use this method if chemicals get in your eyes and you are alone.
- Loosely bandage the eye with sterile cloth and tape. Don't touch the eye. Get Medical Care Right Away!



*Flush the eye(s) with water immediately!*



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## Eye Injuries & Irritation, Continued

### For a Bruise from a Minor Injury that Surrounds the Eye, But Does Not Damage the Eye Itself

- Put a cold compress over the injured area right away. Do this for 15 minutes, every hour, for 48 hours.
- Take an over-the-counter medicine for the pain and swelling.
- After 48 hours, put a warm compress over the injured area.
- Seek medical care if these measures do not help.

### To Remove a Foreign Particle On the White of the Eye or Inside the Eyelids

- Do not remove an object stuck in the eye, a metal chip, or a foreign body over the colored part of the eye. (See **For a Foreign Body Sticking Into the Eye** on previous page.)
- Wash your hands.
- If the foreign object is under the upper lid, look down and pull the upper lid away from the eyeball by gently grabbing the eyelashes. Press a cotton-tipped swab down on the skin surface of the upper eyelid and pull it up and toward the brow. The upper lid will invert.
- Twist a piece of tissue. Moisten the tip with tap water (not saliva). Gently try to touch the speck with the tip. Carefully pass the tissue over the speck which should cling to the tip.
- Do not rub the eye or use tweezers or anything sharp to remove a foreign object.
- Gently wash the eye with cool water.

### For Dry, Irritated Eyes

With your doctor's okay, use over-the-counter artificial tear drops, such as Ocu-Lube. Refrigerate the solution, if needed. Wash your hands before using.



*When you use eye drops, follow the label's directions.*

### For an Insect Bite Without a Severe Allergic Reaction

- Wash the eye(s) with warm water.
- Take an antihistamine if okay with your doctor.

### Prevention

- Wear safety glasses when your eyes are exposed to sawdust, etc. Wear sunglasses that block UV rays.
- When using harsh chemicals, wear rubber gloves and protective glasses. Don't rub your eyes if you've touched harsh chemicals. Turn your head away from chemical vapors.
- To help prevent dry eyes, use a humidifier. Limit exposure to smoke, dust, and wind. Don't drink alcohol.
- Use artificial tear drops with your doctor's okay.
- Don't stare directly at the sun, especially during a solar eclipse.
- Don't use eye makeup when an allergy or chemical irritant bothers your eye(s).
- Don't allow a child to stick his or her head out of the window of a moving car, etc. Sand, insects, and other flying objects can strike the eye and irritate or damage the cornea.
- Don't let children play with or near sparklers, bottle rockets, and other fireworks.