

Columbus Ophthalmology Associates
CORNEAL ABRASION

What is the cornea?

The cornea is the clear front window of the eye which covers the iris and pupil. It acts much like the crystal that covers the face of a watch.

What is a corneal abrasion?

The cornea can be injured or scratched by objects, such as a fingernail or a contact lens. This scratch is known as a corneal abrasion.

What are the symptoms of a corneal abrasion?

- Painful eye (sensitivity to light)
- Redness and watering in the eye
- Feeling of grit or sand in the eye
- Blurred vision

How is a corneal abrasion treated?

A corneal abrasion can be very painful if nerve endings of the cornea are exposed. Repeated blinking further irritates the abrasion; therefore, placing a soft contact lens on the injury may be helpful. This allows the damaged outer surface to fill in the defect created by the injury. To prevent infection, an antibiotic drop or ointment will often be prescribed particularly if the source of injury is a dirty object. Artificial tears and lubricant gels can also be used to aid in surface repair.

What are the possible complications?

If a bacterium gets into the open wound, a serious infection can occur. This may result in permanent scarring of the cornea, which can reduce vision.

In certain circumstances, the corneal abrasion may breakdown even months after the original injury. These are known as recurrent erosions and are treated with ointment to protect the surface from breaking down. Occasionally, they do require surgical treatment to prevent reoccurrence.

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