

Columbus Ophthalmology Associates
IRITIS

What is iritis?

The iris is the colored portion of the eye that surrounds the pupil. There are many delicate blood vessels that nourish the iris and structures in front of the eye. Inflammation along these vessels causes a leakage of protein and cells into the front part of the eye. This is what is known as iritis.

What are the symptoms of iritis?

Symptoms of iritis are light sensitivity, blurred vision, pain, tearing, floaters, redness of the eye and a small pupil. It is different from conjunctivitis because there is very little discharge from the eye and is often only present in one eye. It is not contagious because it is not an infection, but rather an inflammation of the eye.

What causes iritis?

Iritis can be related to a viral infection, injury or chemical burn to the eye. Most of the time, however, the cause is unknown. In certain circumstances there may be an underlying health problem such as arthritis or thyroid disease.

How is iritis treated?

Because the untreated eye can suffer complications such as glaucoma, cataract or visual loss, prompt treatment is essential. Anti-inflammatory drugs are necessary to reduce the swelling inside the eye. Dilating eye drops may also be needed to break scar tissue that can form between the surface of the lens and the iris. Treatment will vary depending on the severity as well as the cause. In certain circumstances, iritis can recur and may require additional treatment. Iritis must be treated to avoid permanent problems such as scarring inside the eye. A case of iritis can last six to eight weeks. During this time, patients must be observed carefully to monitor potential side effects from medications.

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