

This material will help you understand all about corneal ulcers, their causes, and how they are treated.

## What is a corneal ulcer?

A corneal ulcer is an infection within the cornea. The cornea is the clear window in the front of the eye (see picture on the right). Symptoms and complications vary from case to case. It can also depend on the source of the infection. Some common symptoms include:

- Blurred vision
- Eye pain
- Sensitivity to light
- Redness
- White patch on cornea

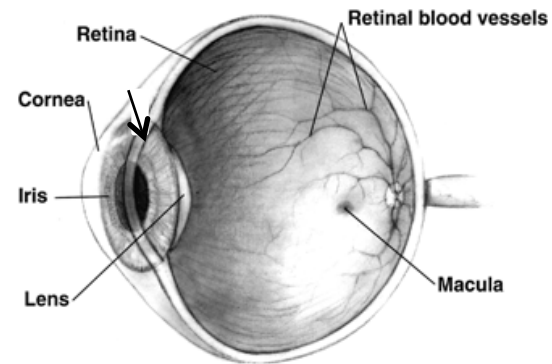


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## What causes a corneal ulcer?

A corneal ulcer often occurs after some kind of corneal trauma, like a scratch or a cut to the cornea. If there is an area where the cornea is already scratched, bacteria, fungi, or other organisms can get into the cornea and infect it.

Other risk factors include:

- Your cornea is not healthy to begin with. For example, if your diabetes is not under control.
- You wear contact lenses for long periods of time.
- You sleep with contact lenses in your eyes overnight.

## **What is the treatment for corneal ulcers?**

The best advice is to protect you from getting a corneal ulcer in the first place. It is important to wear protective eyewear if there is any chance for an eye injury. Such eyewear can be worn when you are doing yard work, construction work, or playing sports.

If you wear contact lenses, make sure to remove them when you sleep at night. It is also important to clean your contact lenses properly and throw away old contact lenses.

Small corneal ulcers can be treated with prescribed antibiotic eye drops. More severe corneal ulcers may require stronger, specially mixed antibiotic drops. Corneal ulcers can cause holes and scarring, leading to serious vision loss. This is why it is important to follow up with your eye doctor regularly as your ulcer heals. This could take from a few weeks up to several months. If the ulcer heals with a large scar and it affects your vision, you may need other treatments and procedures to improve your vision.

**For more information, scan these codes with your smartphone or visit the websites listed.**



<http://kellogg.umich.edu/patientcare/conditions/keratitis.html>



<http://www.geteyesmart.org/eyesmart/diseases/corneal-ulcer.cfm>

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