

Neurotrophic Keratopathy

This material will help you understand the diagnosis of neurotrophic keratopathy, its causes, and how it may be treated.

What is neurotrophic keratopathy?

The cornea is the clear, dome-shaped window in the front of the eye. The cornea has a very large number of nerves. This makes it very sensitive, especially to pain and temperature. Neurotrophic keratopathy occurs when the nerves in the cornea break down. This causes the cornea to lose feeling, which may lead to more serious problems such as corneal ulcers, bacterial infections, and slower healing of the cornea if it becomes damaged.

What causes neurotrophic keratopathy?

Both systemic (those that affect the entire body) and eye conditions may play a role in neurotrophic keratopathy. Common examples include viruses such as herpes simplex or zoster. Repeated use of eye drops and medications, primarily those used to relieve pain, can also cause nerve damage. People with diabetes also have a higher chance of developing this condition. Just as diabetes can cause the loss of feeling in hands and feet, it can have a similar effect on the cornea.

What are the symptoms of neurotrophic keratopathy?

Common symptoms of neurotrophic keratopathy include:

- Frequent corneal erosions (spontaneous scratches of the cornea)
- Dry eyes
- Extreme sensitivity to light

- Cloudy or blurry vision

Important Note: because this condition causes a loss of feeling, you may not have any pain. If your eye suddenly becomes red or your vision changes, you should call your eye doctor right away.

How is neurotrophic keratopathy treated?

Treatment for this condition will depend on the nature of your case. Artificial tears and ointments may be used to help relieve dryness. If you do use eye drops, it is important to avoid those with preservatives. These can be abrasive and may cause more damage to your cornea. If your condition is more severe, surgery may be necessary to protect the cornea.

You and your doctor will discuss the treatment that is best for you.

For more information, scan this code with your smartphone or visit the website listed.



<http://emedicine.medscape.com/article/1194889-overview>

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