

Recurrent Corneal Erosion

This material will help you understand recurrent corneal erosions and how they can be treated.

What is a recurrent corneal erosion?

The cornea is the clear window in the front of the eye. A corneal erosion is a “scratch of the eye”. It occurs when the cornea’s outermost layer of cells (epithelium) detaches from the “basement membrane” layer beneath it (see picture on the right). Once an area has detached, it may take a long time for it to firmly reattach. This area is weak and can reinjure with even minor trauma to that area.

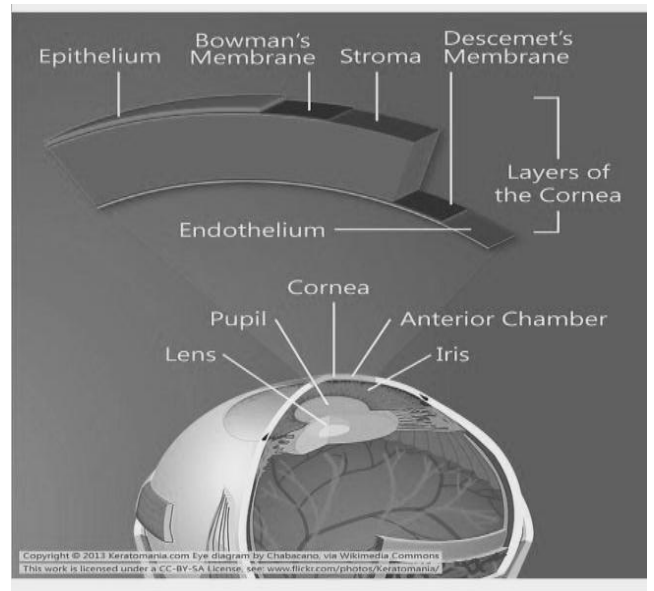


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So erosions may occur many times over time before finally healing. After an injury to the cornea, such as from a fingernail, a recurrent erosion may recur months or even years later in the weakened area. Recurrent corneal erosions expose the corneal nerves, which can cause intense pain, tearing, light sensitivity, and blurred vision.

What causes recurrent corneal erosions?

A patient usually has episodes of recurrent erosion after an initial injury to the cornea. Although the surface of the cornea eventually heals, it is weaker and

more prone to this chance “scratch” even without major trauma. Recurrent corneal erosions may form many weeks after the original injury.

You may have severe eye pain as well as excessive tearing. This most often occurs during or just after you wake up from sleep. The attacks may be caused by rubbing your eyes or simply opening your eyelids. Episodes usually last from hours up to days.

How can I prevent recurrent corneal erosions?

- Avoid objects that may irritate or dry your eye (such as dry or hot air, fans, wind or cigarette smoke)
- Wear protective glasses when outdoors in windy conditions
- Use artificial tears when your eye feels uncomfortable
- Use an artificial tear ointment in your eyes at night to provide lubrication

How is a recurrent corneal erosion treated?

There are short-term and long-term treatments for recurrent corneal erosions. Your eye doctor may prescribe a lubrication treatment or a bandage soft contact lens as initial treatment to heal the erosion. Longer term lubricating drops or ointment may then be prescribed. There are also surgical options available if the erosions continue.

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

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



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



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

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Last Revised 03/2015