

Anterior Uveitis (Iritis)

This material will help you understand anterior uveitis, also known as iritis, its causes, and how it may be treated.

What is anterior uveitis?

Uveitis occurs when the uvea becomes inflamed. The uvea is the middle layer of the eye. Anterior uveitis involves the front part of the eye. It is often called **iritis** because it usually affects the iris. The iris is the colored part of the eye that is brown, gray, blue or green. When the uvea or the iris becomes inflamed, cells collect and float around the front chamber of the eye, in front of the iris/pupil. These cells can cause you to have blurry vision, eye pain, redness, and make your eye very sensitive to light.

Anterior uveitis (iritis) is the most common type of uveitis. It can occur suddenly (acute), be long lasting (chronic), or may come back every so often (relapsing).

What causes anterior uveitis?

In most cases, the cause of anterior uveitis is not known. It may be caused by some viruses, such as shingles or herpes simplex. Certain systematic conditions (those that affect the entire body) may also lead to anterior uveitis. Some examples include: rheumatoid arthritis, lupus, Ankylosing Spondylitis (a disease of the spine and hips), ulcerative colitis, Crohn's disease, and sarcoidosis. Anterior uveitis can also occur after an eye trauma or surgery.

How is anterior uveitis treated?

Anterior uveitis may scar the eye or lead to other conditions that can cause vision loss. For this reason it should be treated as soon as possible. Treatment usually includes medication in the form of steroid eye drops, dilating drops, or pills to reduce swelling and help relieve pain. Treatment of the underlying cause (if one exists) may include medications to suppress the immune system. Depending on the cause, it may also include antibiotics or antivirals.

Dark glasses may also be worn if your eyes are sensitive to light.

With proper treatment, most cases of anterior uveitis go away within a few weeks. But it is common for the condition to return. See your doctor if symptoms return after successful treatment.

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



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



<http://www.geteyesmart.org/eyesmart/diseases/uveitis/index.cfm>

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Last Revised 01/2015