

This material will help you understand exposure keratopathy, its causes, and treatment.

## What is exposure keratopathy?

Exposure keratopathy results when the eyelid does not protect the cornea well enough. This causes dryness and roughness of the surface of the cornea (the clear domed window in the front of your eye). The cornea's main job is to help focus light as it enters the eyes.

Exposure keratopathy happens as a result of the cornea being exposed too much to the air.

Those who experience exposure keratopathy may have:

- Blurred vision
- Eye irritation
- Red eyes
- Dry eyes

Severe exposure may result in a corneal ulcer, or an infection of the cornea.

## What are the causes of exposure keratopathy?

The most common cause of exposure keratopathy is that your eyelids do not close all the way. The eyelids help protect the eye from drying out while you are awake and when you are sleeping. If you have any condition that changes the way the eyelids close (such as problems closing the eye, thyroid eye disease or floppy eyelid syndrome), you can develop exposure keratopathy.

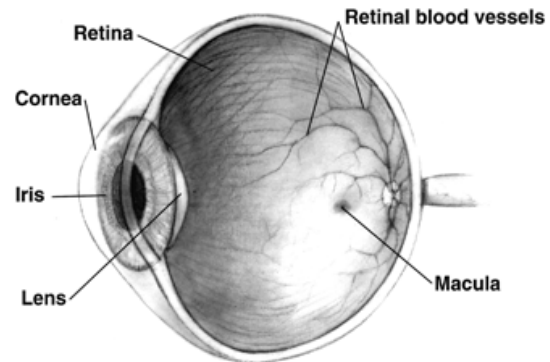


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## **How is exposure keratopathy treated?**

In mild cases, artificial tears, gel, or ointment can be used to treat exposure keratopathy. Some doctors also recommend wearing moisture chamber glasses. These are glasses that are shielded on all sides, like a cross between swim goggles and glasses. Wearing these glasses will keep the eyes moist even if they are slightly open. All these techniques will keep the corneal surface hydrated and clear.

If you get an infection, such as an ulcer, your doctor will prescribe antibiotic drops or ointment. In other cases, the best treatment to improve eyelid closure is surgery. For example, if the lower eyelids are too low, or the upper eyelids are too high, they can be raised or lowered through surgery. In some serious cases, surgery needs to be done to partially or completely sew the eyelids closed to allow the cornea to heal. This type of treatment can be temporary or permanent. Talk to your doctor about the best course of treatment for your exposure keratopathy.

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



<http://www.aao.org/publications/eyenet/201404/upload/april-2014-ophthalmic-pearls.pdf>

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