

Pterygium

Ophthalmology

Introduction

This leaflet is for patients who have been diagnosed with Pterygium and contains information about the condition and how it is treated.

What is pterygium?

A pterygium is a fleshy, wing-shaped growth of tissue across the cornea, which is the clear window at the front of the eye. It is most common in people who have lived in a hot dusty country or have worked outdoors for many years. Its cause is believed to be exposure to ultraviolet light from the sun.

How does pterygium affect the eye?

Pterygium can limit your eye movements, can cause eye irritation, foreign body sensation, dryness and blurred vision. It can also threaten visual axis and induce irregular astigmatism (focussing issues) and chronic inflammation.

What treatment is there for pterygium?

If the pterygium is small, no treatment is required. If the eye is uncomfortable, lubricating eye drops or ointment may help. These can be obtained from your G.P. General Practitioner on repeat prescription and can be used long-term if needed. However if the pterygium advances to the pupillary area, patient is symptomatic and keen for surgery then it is best to have it surgically removed.

What is the surgery for pterygium?

The surgery for pterygium is usually performed under local anaesthetic as a day case in the surgery theatre. You can eat and drink normally before the surgery. The eye is numbed with drops and an injection. The pterygium is removed from the cornea and the sclera (white part of eye). A conjunctival graft is placed with glue / stitches onto the bare sclera. The operated eye will be covered with the plastic eye shield.

The prevention of infection is a major priority in all healthcare and everyone has a part to play.

- Please decontaminate your hands frequently for 20 seconds using soap and water or alcohol gel if available
- If you have symptoms of diarrhoea and/or vomiting, cough or other respiratory symptoms, a temperature or any loss of taste or smell please do not visit the hospital or any other care facility and seek advice from 111
- Keep the environment clean and tidy
- Let's work together to keep infections out of our hospitals and care homes.

Consent

We must seek your consent for any procedure or treatment beforehand. Your doctor will explain the risks, benefits and alternatives where relevant before they ask for your consent. If you are unsure about any aspect of the procedure or treatment proposed, please do not hesitate to ask for more information.

You should be aware that any tissue removed as part of your treatment may be used for diagnostic purposes as well as teaching, education, quality assurance, audit and research.

What are the Benefits?

- Improve symptoms
- Prevents inflammation

What are the Risks?

- 20% chance of recurrence
- Persistent redness
- Decreased vision
- Surgery may need to be repeated
- Infection
- Bleeding
- Scarring of the cornea

What are the Alternatives?

There is no alternative to surgery. If surgery not undertaken, the Pterygium could continue growing and block the visual axis which will affect your vision.

Is there anything I need to do prior to surgery?

There is nothing you need to do prior to surgery you normally continue with medication prior to surgery, but your consultant will advise.

What can I expect on the day of surgery?

You will receive a letter confirming the date your surgery will carry out. You should arrive at hospital at the time shown in your letter. You can bring someone with you, however, you should be aware that there is nowhere for them to wait, therefore, once you are admitted they will be asked to leave and return to collect you. You will normally be discharged the same day following the procedure.

What happens after the operation?

After surgery you will be given drops to use in the operated eye. The eye may feel sore for few days. You can take pain relief tablets if needed. You will be advised to use antibiotic drop and steroid eye drop. You will be given a small supply of drops from the hospital but ask your GP for repeat prescription. Do not stop the drops until the Clinician advises you to do so.

What problems are there after surgery?

- Pain – This should settle down within few days with painkillers
- Redness – The eye may look red for few days after surgery but will gradually improve with time
- The lubricants may still be required long term to prevent dryness

Will I need a follow up appointment?

You will need follow-up visits to the clinic. The first one will be arranged before you leave hospital. You may need at least a week off work so please ask for sick note if you need one.

References

- <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/14651858.CD011349.pub2/full>, accessed 20/7/17
- <http://www.college-optometrists.org/guidance/clinical-management-guidelines/pterygium>, accessed 20/7/17
- University Hospital Southampton, NHS Foundation Trust, Patient information Leaflet, Pterygium, accessed 20/7/17

What should I do if I need advice or information?

Staff in Ophthalmology are here to help and contactable as follows:

Corneal Specialist Nurse:

01902 695831

Monday, 9:00am – 5.00pm

Thursday, 9:00am – 1.00pm

Friday, 9:00am – 1.30pm

Mobile: 07824 867119

Eye Referral Unit

01902 695805

Monday – Friday, 8:00am – 5:00pm

Weekends, 8:00am – 5:00pm

Outside of these hours, please attend the main Emergency Department or contact NHS Direct on telephone number 111.

English

If you need information in another way like easy read or a different language please let us know.

If you need an interpreter or assistance please let us know.

Lithuanian

Jeigu norėtumėte, kad informacija jums būtų pateikta kitu būdu, pavyzdžiui, supaprastinta forma ar kita kalba, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Jeigu jums reikia vertėjo ar kitos pagalbos, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Polish

Jeżeli chcieliby Państwo otrzymać te informacje w innej postaci, na przykład w wersji łatwej do czytania lub w innym języku, prosimy powiedzieć nam o tym.

Prosimy poinformować nas również, jeżeli potrzebowaliby Państwo usługi tłumaczenia ustnego lub innej pomocy.

Punjabi

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ, ਜਿਵੇਂ ਪੜ੍ਹਨ ਵਿਚ ਆਸਾਨ ਰੂਪ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੂਜੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ, ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਦੁਆਸ਼ੀਏ ਦੀ ਜਾਂ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

Romanian

Dacă aveți nevoie de informații în alt format, ca de exemplu caractere ușor de citit sau altă limbă, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Dacă aveți nevoie de un interpret sau de asistență, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Traditional Chinese

如果您需要以其他方式了解信息，如易读或其他语种，请告诉我们。

如果您需要口译人员或帮助，请告诉我们。