

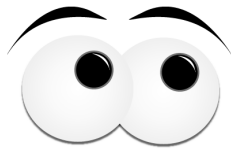


Eye Injuries

A foreign body is an object in your eye that shouldn't be there, such as a speck of dust, wood chip, metal shaving, insect or piece of glass. The common places to find a foreign body are under the eyelid or on the surface of your eye.

Those most at risk are trades people such as labourers, woodcutters, fitters and turners, and boilermakers.

Only attempt to take the foreign body out if there is a first aid officer, or appropriately trained person on site.



Symptoms

The symptoms of a foreign body in the eye include:

- Sharp pain in your eye followed by burning and irritation
- Feeling that there is something in your eye
- Watery and red eye
- Scratchy feeling when blinking
- Blurred vision or loss of vision in the affected eye
- Sensitivity to bright lights
- Bleeding into the white of the eye (subconjunctival haemorrhage).

Possible Complications

Most injuries are minor and usually heal without further problems given the right care. Possible complications include:



Infection and Scarring

If the foreign body is not removed from your eye, it may lead to infection and scarring. For example, metal objects react with the eye's natural tears and rust forms around the metal. This is seen as a dark spot on the white of the eye and can cause a scar that may affect your vision. Once it is removed, symptoms should quickly ease.

- **Corneal scratches or abrasions** - a foreign body may scratch the cornea, which is the clear membrane on the front of the eye. With the right care, most corneal abrasions - even large ones - heal within 48 hours.
- **Ulcer** - sometimes a scratch on the cornea doesn't heal. A defect on the surface of your eye (ulcer) may form in its place. This could affect your vision.
- **Penetration of the eye** - sometimes an object can pierce the eye and enter the eyeball, causing serious injury and even blindness.

Taking care of yourself at home

Suggestions include:

- Don't drive with an eye patch on - it can be very difficult to judge distances properly.
- You may take the patch off to go to sleep, but be sure to put it back on again the next morning. If the tape isn't sticking, use sticky tape.
- You may have some discomfort in the eye. Take a pain-killer that contains paracetamol. Check the packet for instructions.



Prevention suggestions

The best way to prevent this happening again is to protect your eyes. Suggestions include:

- Always wear safety glasses when working in dusty or windy areas, and especially when working in a place where flying debris is likely.
- The safety glasses or goggles should be close fitting with side shields. Regular sunglasses or corrective glasses are not enough.
- Don't stand or walk near anyone who is grinding or drilling.
- Wear safety glasses when playing sport.
- If you do get something in your eye again, wash it with water or saline.