

Patient information

Sub-conjunctival haemorrhage

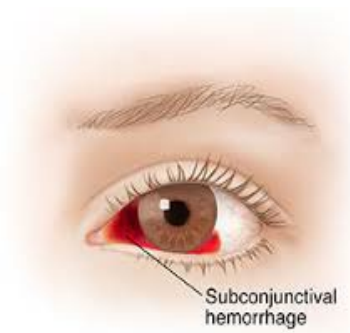
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What is a sub-conjunctival haemorrhage?

The conjunctiva is a thin transparent membrane covering the white of the eye. A sub-conjunctival haemorrhage is where the eye looks red due to a small bleed underneath the conjunctiva. It can look alarming but generally causes no symptoms, and it is usually harmless.

The redness can look like it is getting worse before it starts to clear and usually the redness clears within two weeks.



What causes a sub-conjunctival haemorrhage?

The most common causes are:

- Coughing, sneezing, straining or nose blowing
- Forcefully rubbing the eye
- High blood pressure
- Use of anti-coagulants (blood thinning medication)
- Strenuous activities (like carrying heavy shopping bags or lifting heavy things)
- Sometimes following an eye operation.

Signs and symptoms of a sub-conjunctival haemorrhage

Signs are:

- A flat or slightly raised bright red patch or spot in the conjunctiva (the white of the eye).
- When somebody else notices it and draws your attention to the red eye.

Symptoms:

- Might have a mild popping sensation in the eye prior to observing the redness, but can also be painless.
- Might have a mild foreign body sensation (like there is something in the eye) or an ache in the eye.
- Does not affect your eyesight.
- Can be symptom-free.

What is the treatment for a sub-conjunctival haemorrhage?

This condition usually does not require any treatment and will settle by itself (just like a bruise to the body), usually within two weeks. If the eye is uncomfortable, lubricating eye drops may be recommended (this can be from your local pharmacist or opticians). You can carry on with your normal activities while the haemorrhage is healing.

What should I do if I have a problem?

You should speak to a pharmacist, optician or doctor if you:

- Think you have injured the eye (for example a football hitting the eye or an object that may have got into the eye).
- Have noticed unexplained bleeding or bruising elsewhere on your body.
- Have not had your blood pressure checked recently.
- Have a blood condition such as lymphoma or leukaemia or are on chemotherapy for cancer.

Of course, if you feel you need to be seen urgently for a new eye problem, either contact an optician for a same day appointment or attend your local Accident and Emergency Department.

Sources of information

Moorfields Eye Hospital (2018), *Patient information leaflet – Sub-conjunctival haemorrhage*. Accessed via www.moorsfields.nhs.uk (January 2025)

Guys and St. Thomas NHS Foundation Trust (2022) *Sub-conjunctival haemorrhage, Overview*. Accessed via www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk (January 2025)

Important information

The information in this leaflet is for guidance purposes only and is not intended to replace professional clinical advice from a qualified practitioner.

Your comments

We are always interested to hear your views about our leaflets. If you have any comments, please contact the patient experience team on 0300 131 4784 or esh-tr.patientexperience@nhs.net.

Hand hygiene

We are committed to maintaining a clean, safe environment. Hand hygiene is very important in controlling infection. Alcohol gel is widely available at the patient bedside for staff use and at the entrance of each clinical area for visitors to clean their hands before and after entering

Other formats

If you require any of our leaflets in alternative formats, such as large print or alternative languages, please contact the Equality and Human Rights Department on 0300 131 4434 or esh-tr.AccessibleInformation@nhs.net

After reading this information are there any questions you would like to ask? Please list below and ask your nurse or doctor.

Reference

Reviewed by: Paul Russell, Ophthalmology Staff Nurse

The directorate group that have agreed this patient information leaflet:
Ophthalmology Department, Diagnostic, Anaesthetic and Surgery division (DAS)

Next review date: April 2027

Responsible clinician/author: Ophthalmology Department (ESHT)

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