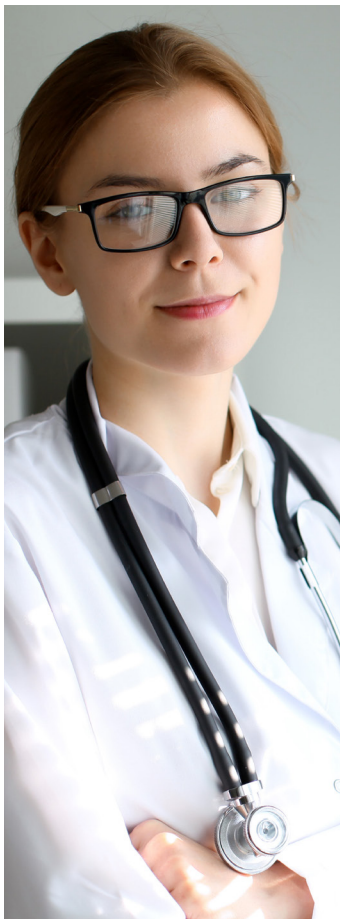




# Eye irritations & injuries

As you age, your eyes can get irritated more easily because they make less tears. Poorer vision increases the risk for eye injuries.



## SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

You feel burning, dryness, itching, and/or pain and swelling in one or both eyes.

## CAUSES & CARE

**Eye Irritation:** Causes include particles in the eye; too much sun exposure, low humidity; strong wind; digital eye strain; and scratches from contact lenses. Other causes are allergies, infections, and conditions that make your eyes dry.

**Eye Injuries:** Causes include a physical blow to the eye; harsh chemicals; and a foreign body that is stuck in the eye. Mild eye irritations and injuries can be treated with self-care. More serious problems need medical care.

## PREVENTION

- Wear safety glasses for activities that expose your eyes to sawdust, etc.
- When using harsh chemicals, wear rubber gloves and protective glasses. Don't rub your eyes if you've touched harsh chemicals. Turn your head away from chemical vapors.
- To help prevent dry eyes, use a humidifier and limit exposure to smoke, dust, and wind. Avoid alcohol.
- Use artificial tear drops with your doctor's okay.
- Don't stare directly at the sun, especially during a solar eclipse.
- Wear sunglasses that block UV rays.
- Don't use eye makeup when an allergy or chemical irritant bothers your eye(s).

## CONTACT DOCTOR

### WHEN:

You have any of these problems:

- Eye pain with eye irritation
- An eye that is red and/or swollen
- Yellow-green pus is under the eyelid or drains from the eye.
- Sensitivity to light

## GET IMMEDIATE CARE

### WHEN:

- Harmful chemicals have gotten into the eye(s).
- A foreign body sticks into the eye.
- Any of these problems occurs with a blow to the eye or other eye injury:
  - Loss of vision
  - Blurred or double vision
  - Blood in the pupil
- A cut to the eye or eyelid occurs.



## SELF-CARE / FIRST AID

### Ease Discomfort of Dry Eyes:

With your doctor's okay, use over-the-counter artificial tear drops, such as Ocu-Lube. Read the label. Refrigerate the solution, if needed. Wash your hands before using.

### Treat an Insect Bite Without a Severe Allergic Reaction:

- Wash the eye(s) with warm water.
- Take an antihistamine if okay with your doctor.

### Treat a Bruise from a Minor Injury that Surrounds the Eye but Does Not Damage the Eye Itself:

- Put a cold compress over the injured area right away. Keep doing this for 15 minutes, every hour, for 48 hours.
- Take an over-the-counter medicine for the pain and inflammation.
- After 48 hours, put a warm compress over the injured area.
- Seek medical attention if these measures do not help.

### Remove a Foreign Particle On the White of the Eye or Inside the Eyelids:

- Do not remove an object imbedded in the eye or over the colored part of the eye.
- Wash your hands.
- If the foreign object is under the upper lid, have the person look down and pull the upper lid away from the eyeball by gently grabbing the eyelashes. Press a cotton-tipped swab down on the skin surface of the upper eyelid and pull it up and toward the brow. The upper lid will invert. Touch and remove the debris with another cotton-tipped swab, or the tip of a tissue.
- Twist a piece of tissue, moisten the tip with tap water (not saliva) and gently try to touch the speck with the tip. Carefully pass the tissue over the speck, which should cling to the tip.
- Do not rub the eye or use tweezers or anything sharp to remove a foreign object.
- Gently wash the eye with cool water.

### First Aid for Foreign Body Sticking Into the Eye Before Immediate Care:

- Do not remove the object.
- Do not rinse with water.
- Don't press on, touch, or rub the eye.
- Cover the injured eye with a paper cup or other clean object that will not touch the eye or the foreign object. Hold the paper cup in place with tape without putting pressure on the eye or the foreign object.
- Gently cover the uninjured eye with a clean bandage and tape, too, to keep the injured eye still.
- Get emergency medical care.

### First Aid for Harmful Chemicals in the Eye(s) Before Immediate Care:

- Flush the eye(s) with water immediately!
- Hold the injured eye open with your thumb and forefinger.
- At the faucet or with a pitcher or other clean container, flush the eye with a lot of water. Start at the inside corner and pour downward to the outside corner. This lets the water drain away from the body and keeps it from getting in the other eye.
- Keep pouring the water for at least 20 minutes. Flush the eye with water until you get medical help.
- If both eyes are injured, pour water over both eyes at the same time or quickly alternate the above procedure from one eye to another.
- Loosely bandage the eye with sterile cloth and tape. Don't touch the eye.