Corneal Laceration

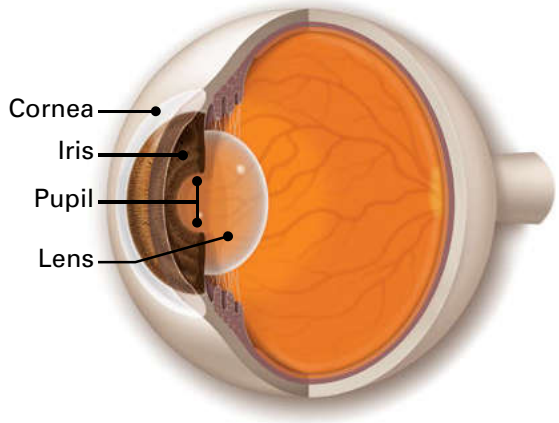
What is a corneal laceration?

The cornea is the clear front window of the eye. A corneal laceration is a cut on the cornea. It is usually caused by something sharp flying into the eye. It can also be caused by something striking the eye with significant force, like a metallic hand tool. A corneal laceration is deeper than a corneal abrasion, cutting partially or fully through the cornea. If the corneal laceration is deep enough it can cause a full thickness laceration. This is when the laceration cuts completely through the cornea and causes a ruptured globe, a tear into the eyeball itself.

A corneal laceration is a very serious injury and requires immediate medical attention to avoid severe vision loss.

If your eye has been injured, you should do the following:

- gently place a shield over the eye to protect it. Cut away the bottom part of a paper cup and tape this piece to the area around the eye. Wear this to protect your eye until you get medical help.
- do not rinse with water
- do not remove the object stuck in eye
- do not rub or apply pressure to eye
- avoid giving aspirin, ibuprofen or other non-steroidal, anti-inflammatory drugs. These drugs thin the blood and may increase bleeding
- after you have finished protecting the eye, see a physician immediately



Most corneal lacerations can be prevented by using protective eye wear during high risk activities.

What are corneal laceration symptoms?

Corneal laceration symptoms may include:

- severe pain
- tearing
- sensitivity to light
- blurred or decreased vision
- bleeding (blood in the eye)
- the feeling that there is something in the eye

What causes corneal laceration?

Any activity in which objects can fly into the eye at high speed can cause a corneal laceration. The most common causes of a corneal laceration are such activities as:

- cutting wood
- grinding metal
- trimming grass
- carving stone

Always wear protective eye wear while working on household projects. Flying fragments can injure the unprotected eye.

Contact with dust, dirt, sand, or even an edge of a piece of paper can possibly cut the cornea if enough force is involved.

Most corneal lacerations can be prevented by using protective eye wear during high risk activities.

How is a corneal laceration diagnosed?

If you have any corneal laceration symptoms, you should see an ophthalmologist immediately. He or she will perform a complete eye examination to determine the extent of the injury. Your ophthalmologist will seek to learn whether the cut is a partial thickness or full thickness laceration.

Your ophthalmologist may use a slit lamp to diagnose a corneal laceration

To examine your corneal laceration, your ophthalmologist may put numbing drops in your eye so that it can stay open for the exam. He or she may also perform a fluorescein eye stain. This is a test that uses orange dye (fluorescein) and a blue light to detect damage to the cornea.

©2018 American Academy of Ophthalmology
Content last reviewed 09/18

Corneal laceration treatment

Surgery is done to close the cut into the eye and to help prevent infection. Surgery helps:

- prevent further damage to the eye
- remove any foreign object remaining in the eye after the injury

Severe lacerations may need several surgeries for repair and can result in permanent vision loss.

Following surgery, your eye may be patched to protect it. Also, your ophthalmologist may give you medications. These can include medication for pain and to help you to heal.

If you have a corneal laceration, you may be at risk for complications, including retinal detachment, infection and glaucoma. It is important that you follow up with your ophthalmologist for care after your immediate treatment.

Summary

A corneal laceration is a cut on the cornea. They are usually caused by something sharp flying into the eye. A corneal laceration needs to be treated right away to avoid vision loss. Surgery is usually needed to prevent further damage to the eye and to remove any foreign objects from the eye. After surgery, you may need to wear a patch. Medication may be needed for pain and to help you heal.

If you have any questions about your eyes or your vision, speak with your ophthalmologist. He or she is committed to protecting your sight.

Get more information about corneal laceration from EyeSmart—provided by the American Academy of Ophthalmology—at **aao.org/corneal-laceration-link**.

COMPLIMENTS OF:

BRYAN VEKOVIUS, M.D.

OCULOPLASTIC SURGERY AND
NEURO-OPHTHALMOLOGY

450 ASHLEY RIDGE BLVD.
SHREVEPORT, LA 71106

(318) 675-3733

©2018 American Academy of Ophthalmology
Content last reviewed 09/18