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Teaching, training & research

Our Trust is committed to teaching, training and research to support the development of health and healthcare in our community. Healthcare students may observe consultations for this purpose. You can opt out if you do not want students to observe. We may also ask you if you would like to be involved in our research.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS offers impartial advice and assistance to patients, their relatives, friends and carers. We can listen to feedback (positive or negative), answer questions and help resolve any concerns about Trust services. PALS can be contacted on 01904 726262, or email pals@york.nhs.uk. An answer phone is available out of hours.

Providing care together in York,
Scarborough, Bridlington, Malton,
Selby and Easingwold communities



York Teaching Hospital
NHS Foundation Trust

Recurrent Corneal Erosion Syndrome

Information for patients,
relatives and carers

① For more information contact:

Scarborough Eye Clinic
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The Scarborough Hospital
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York Eye Clinic
Telephone 01904 726758
The York Hospital
Wigginton Road, York, YO31 8HE

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What is recurrent corneal erosion syndrome?

In this condition an area of the surface of the eye (cornea) becomes loose and gets dislodged, there are nerves just under this layer making the condition very painful.

What causes recurrent corneal erosion syndrome?

The most common cause is a minor injury to the cornea that appears to heal but then months or years later the symptoms of the original injury come back. This is because the area that was originally damaged has not stuck down properly and has become loose, dislodged or wrinkled up.

When this happens, the original discomfort that was felt returns.

Some people have a naturally delicate surface to their cornea and develop symptoms in one or both eyes without any obvious trauma.

Other factors that may contribute:

- Diabetes
- Smoking
- Blepharitis (inflammation of the eye lids)

What are the symptoms of corneal recurrent erosion syndrome?

- Severe pain on waking which lessens as the day goes on
- Redness
- Watery eye
- Light sensitivity
- Blurred vision

The initial treatment may be:

Topical antibiotic: to prevent infection.

Lubricating ointment: used especially at night for several weeks or months to prevent a reoccurrence; by keeping the cornea and inner surface of the eyelid lubricated it prevents friction which moves the loose area and causes the erosion.

Continuous Wear Contact Lens:

In some cases, we will put a continuous wear contact lens in the eye. This allows the erosion to heal and reduces your discomfort.

What to expect

In most cases, the attacks will lessen with time eventually stopping.

Recurrences may occur and can be self-treated.

If very painful, you may wish to phone the eye clinic for advice. If you have prolonged recurrences over more than three months, you may wish to ask your GP to refer you to the corneal clinic to discuss longer-term treatment.

Longer-term treatments

Use of antibiotic tablets to control blepharitis.

Clearing the loose tissue with alcohol, laser or simple scraping in clinic: This will require a contact lens afterwards and can be painful, but can reduce recurrences.