

Bloodshot eye (Subconjunctival haemorrhage)

Department of Ophthalmology

Information for Patients

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What is a subconjunctival haemorrhage?

The front white part of the eye (known as the sclera) is covered by a see-through (transparent) membrane called the conjunctiva. The conjunctiva has a large blood supply, which flows through lots of tiny blood vessels. A subconjunctival haemorrhage happens when one of these tiny blood vessels leaks, causing a small amount of blood to sit between the sclera and the conjunctiva.

Subconjunctival haemorrhages are quite common as the tiny blood vessels in the conjunctiva are fragile and bleed easily.

What are the symptoms?

- The affected eye will look bloodshot (a red area on the white of the eye)
- This can cover a large area the affected eye may feel tight or gritty
- Usually a subconjunctival haemorrhage is not painful and doesn't affect your eyesight.

**Health information and support is available at www.nhs.uk
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

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What are the causes?

Most subconjunctival haemorrhages happen for no reason, but some may happen because of:

- coughing, sneezing, knocking or rubbing your eye very hard
- diabetes
- high blood pressure
- if you are taking blood-thinning medication (e.g. warfarin)
- after you have had a recent eye operation

You should ask your GP to check for any of the above health conditions if you do not have them. If you come to Eye Casualty, we will check your blood pressure.

Treatment

No treatment is required for a subconjunctival haemorrhage. The bloodshot look of the eye should disappear in 7 to 14 days.

If your eye is feeling uncomfortable, lubricating eye drops may help with this.

Contacts

If you have any concerns about your eyes then you should contact the Eye Casualty Department on **0116 258 6273**.

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