

How to Care for Your Child with a Foreign Body in the Eye

This leaflet will provide you with information about foreign body in the eye causes, symptoms, diagnosis, treatment and home care advice.



What is foreign body in the eye?

It is an object in your eye that should not be there, for example, a wood chip, a speck of dust, an insect or a piece of glass.

What are the causes of foreign body in the eye?

- Dirt
- Sand
- Dust (enter the eye because of wind)
- Glass (can enter the eye after an accident involving broken glass)

What are the symptoms of foreign body in the eye?

- Your child's eye can become:
 - watery and red
 - painful
 - sensitive to light
- these symptoms cause irritation leading to frequent rubbing and blinking
- Your child may feel like there's a foreign body in the eye

How is foreign body in the eye diagnosed?

- The doctor will examine your child's eye and may use:
 - Local anesthetic eye drops.
 - A special light to look at the eye in details
 - A special dye called "fluorescein" to check if there is an abrasion in your child's eye.

- After conducting this examination, the doctor will advise you about the care of your child's eye and the subsequent management plan.

How is foreign body in the eye treated?

- If the foreign body is identified, then the doctor will try to remove the foreign body by using a small cotton applicator, or by washing your child's eye with sterile water for irrigation.
- If the doctor cannot remove the foreign body in the emergency department or if your child has a large corneal abrasion (superficial scratch on the cornea), then the doctor will arrange for a review by an eye specialist called an "ophthalmologist"

Home care advice:

- If the foreign body in the eye is visible, try tapping it with a damp cotton swab.
- Try to flush out the foreign body by flowing water on the eye as you hold the eyelid open
- After removal of the foreign body you would expect the symptoms to improve with 48 - 72 hours
- If your child wear contact lenses please avoid these until the eye is healed
- If your doctor advises to give medicine, you can give
 - o Paracetamol (any brand) or Ibuprofen (any brand)
 - o Follow the instruction on the medicine package for the correct dose for your child
 - o Do not give your child Aspirin as this can cause serious complications

Seek medical advice if your child:

- If the symptoms continue for 72 hours or more

Go to the emergency department

- If your child develops discharge from his/her eye
- If symptoms are getting worse