

Ophthalmology department

Episcleritis (inflammation of the eye)

Information for patients, relatives and carers

Introduction

This leaflet has been designed to give you information about episcleritis and answer some of the questions that you or those who care for you may have. It is not meant to replace the discussion between you and your medical team but aims to help you understand more about what is discussed. If you have any questions about the information below, please contact us.

What is episcleritis?

There are three layers of the eye, the white part called the sclera, a transparent membrane called the conjunctiva and in between those layers is the episclera.

Inflammation of the middle layer, the episclera, is called episcleritis

What causes episcleritis?

The cause is unknown in most cases. Some people who have certain medical conditions (for example, rheumatoid arthritis) or local eye diseases (for example, rosacea) may be more likely to get this type of inflammation.

It most commonly affects one eye only.

Signs and symptoms

- redness (most common)
- foreign body sensation (common)
- eye pain and sensitivity to light (less common)
- tenderness in the eye (less common)
- watering of the eye (less common)

Treatment and follow up

Episcleritis often gets better without treatment. However, you may be given some lubricating eye drops to relieve your condition by the clinician if your symptoms continue or are bothering you.

The inflammation usually improves within 14 days. In some circumstances, the clinician may prescribe medicated eye drops. If you are experiencing any pain, you can take paracetamol or ibuprofen to relieve the discomfort. Only take these medications if you have no allergies.

A follow-up appointment might be organised to see whether the treatment has been effective, but an appointment may not be required.

Who you can contact for more information

- Emergency Department at Western Eye Hospital – 020 3312 3245
- Outpatients at Western Eye Hospital – 020 3312 3236
- Outpatients at Charing Cross Hospital – 020 3311 1109/ 1233/ 0137

How to comment about your visit

We aim to provide the best possible service and staff will be happy to answer any of the questions you may have. If you have any suggestions or comments about your visit, please either speak to a member of staff or contact the patient advice and liaison service (PALS) on 020 3312 7777 (10.00 – 16.00, Monday to Friday). You can also email PALS at imperial.pals@nhs.net The PALS team will listen to your concerns, suggestions or queries and is often able to help solve problems on your behalf.

Alternatively, you may wish to complain by contacting our complaints department:

Complaints department, fourth floor, Salton House, St Mary's Hospital, Praed Street
London W2 1NY

Email: ICHC-tr.Complaints@nhs.net

Telephone: 020 3312 1337 / 1349

Alternative formats

This leaflet can be provided on request in large print or easy read, as a sound recording, in Braille or in alternative languages. Please email the communications team: imperial.communications@nhs.net

Wi-fi

Wi-fi is available at our Trust. For more information visit our website: www.imperial.nhs.uk

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